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**State, society and social control in Indonesia : a comparative study in the cases of  
East Timor and Aceh**

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**State, Society and Social Control in Indonesia: a  
comparative study in the cases of East Timor and Aceh**

**Submitted by**

**Chanintira na Thalang**

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with  
the requirements for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy in the Faculty of  
Social Sciences and Law, Department of Politics

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## **Abstract**

Secessionism occurs when the boundaries of ethnic groups do not correspond with the boundaries of the state and members of the group declare the intent of territorial separation. It is paradoxical that the struggle between a secessionist region and the state should vary in outcome. While some secessionist regions have successfully claimed their independence, others are still fighting for their cause.

East Timor and Aceh have been long standing secessionist regions. However, only East Timor has achieved its goal in declaring an independent state. The success of one secessionist region in claiming its independence shows that the state has been less effective in maintaining its territorial boundaries in one case than the other case where secessionism remains active. This begs the question what determines the state's effectiveness in achieving its policy goals?

This research is a comparative analysis of the Indonesian state's effectiveness in achieving its policy goals towards managing secessionism in East Timor and Aceh. The type of comparative study is the most similar systems. It is the relationship between the secessionist movement and the state where I explore the transformations between the two which in turn influences the characteristics of state response to secessionism. Based on the theoretical ideas put forward by the state-in-society approach, the two cases will be examined in the light of the assumed relationship of the independent variable: the coalitions between and among social forces and state segments which in turn influence state effectiveness in managing secessionism; and the central dependent variables: the success or failure of the state in maintaining its boundaries.

## Acknowledgements

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My friends in Thailand who have remained faithful and supportive of me even at times of silence.

My family, especially my mother, to whom I dedicate my work.



### **Author's Declaration**

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other academic award.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

SIGNED: 

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## Glossary

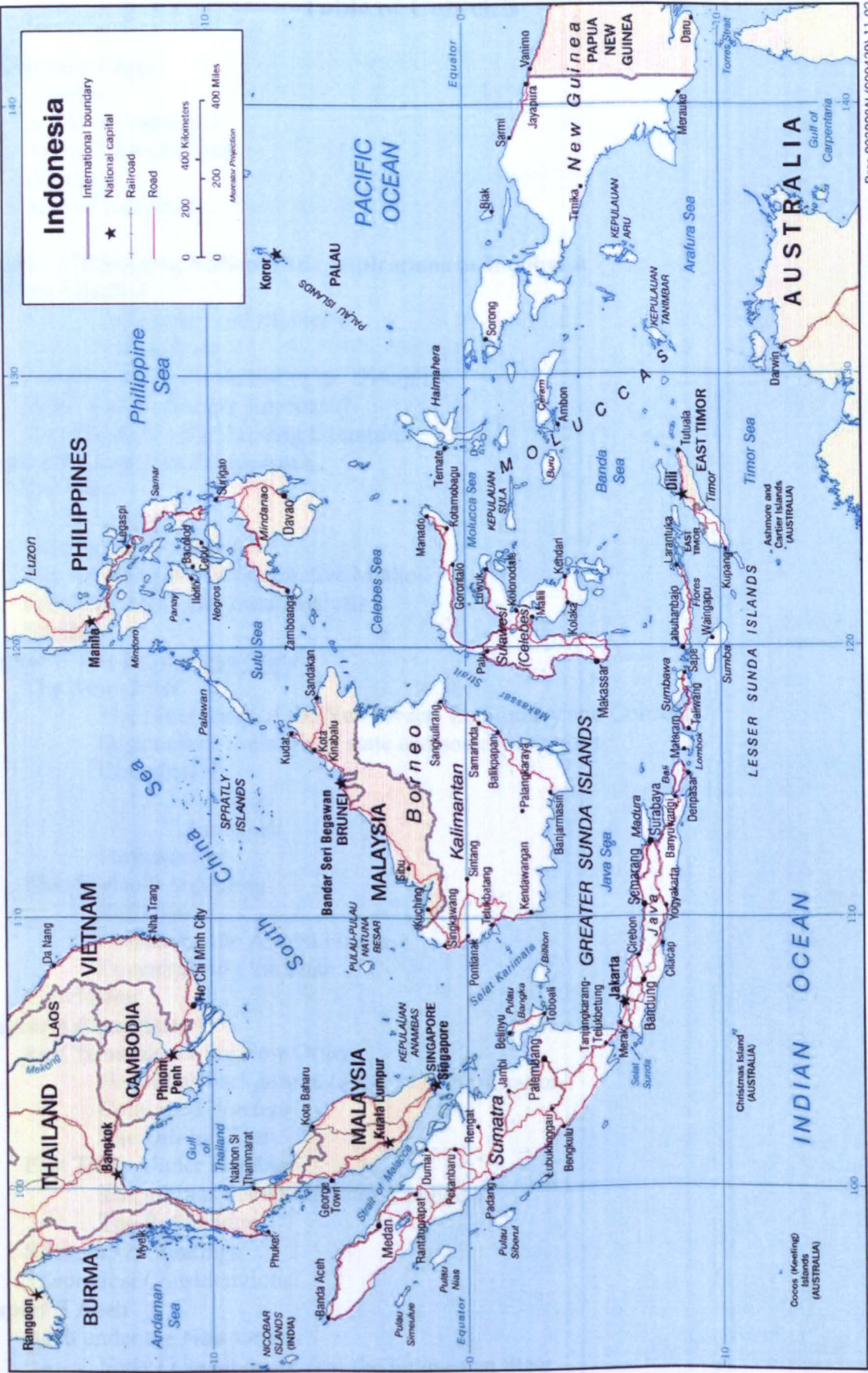
ABRI	Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia or the Indonesian Military
Adat	Customary law
ASDT	Associação Social-Democrata Timorese or the Social Democratic Association of East Timor
Bappenas	Badan Perencanaan dan Pembangunan Nasional or Ministry of National Development Planning
CNRT	Concelho Nacional de Resistencia Timorese or National Council of Resistance of the People of East Timor
COHA	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
Daerah istimewa	special region
Deppen	Department of Information
DPD	Dewan Perwakilan Daerah or Regional Representatives Council or the second chamber
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat or People's Representative Council or parliament
DOM	Daerah Operasi Militer or Military Operational Area
Dwifungsi	Dual function
Falintil	Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor
Fretilin	Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente or the Revolutionary Front of East Timor
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka or the Free Aceh Movement

Golkar	Golongan karya or functional groups
HDC	Henri Dunant Center
ICMI	Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals
INTERFET	International Force for East Timor
JSC	Joint Security Committee
KKN	Korupsi, Kolusi dan Nepotisme or Corruption, collusion and nepotism
Komnas HAM	Komite Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia or the Indonesian Human Rights Commission
Kopassus	Special Forces Unit
Litsus	Penlition khusus or special screening originally used to root out communists
MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat or The people's Consultative Assembly
NAD	Special Autonomy Law on Nanggroe Aceh Darulsalam
NKRI	Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia or the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia's largest Muslim organisation
PAN	National Mandate Party
PDI-P	the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle
Pertamina	Perusahaan Tambang Minyak Negara or the state run oil corporation
PKB	National Awakening Party
PKI	the Indonesian Communist Party
MUI	Majelis Ulama Indonesia or Indonesian Council of Ulama
RRI	Radio Republik Indonesia

Reformasi	reform
SARA	Ethnicity (Suku), religion (Agama), race (Ras) and social class (Antargolongan)
SBY	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
SIRA	Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh or Aceh Information Center
SMUR	Solidaritas Mahasiswa untuk Rakyat or Student Solidarity for the People
LIPI	Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia or Indonesian Institute of Sciences
TVRI	Televisi Republik Indonesia
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia or the Indonesian Armed Forces
Thaliban	muslim students
Ulama dayah	religious teachers
Ulama	religious leaders
UDT	União Democrática Timorense or Timorese Democratic Union
UNAMET	United Nations Mission in East Timor

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Figure 1: Map of Indonesia  
Source: [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_and\\_asia/indonesia\\_pol\\_2002.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_and_asia/indonesia_pol_2002.jpg), accessed 19 February 2007

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# Chapter 1

## Managing Nationalistic Aspirations in Indonesia

### Introduction

On 21 May 1998, Soeharto's three-minute speech announcing his resignation brought an end to his 32-year-old rule. The situation was beyond the imagination of a generation of Indonesians who grew up under the orderliness of the New Order. The economy was in tatters and a once silent society was demanding *reformasi* (reform). Inter-ethnic conflict plagued the archipelago. The army, one of the main pillars that upheld the regime, had become disoriented and showed a considerable amount of restraint amidst strong societal pressures for democratisation. Secessionist movements in East Timor, Papua and Aceh re-emerged prompting fears that Indonesia could be heading towards the destructive path of '*Balkanisation*'<sup>1</sup>.

Inheriting a state consisting of a multiplicity of cultures with more than one basis of differentiation was no easy task. The successors of the colonial state ruled a diverse population. The colonially constructed boundaries of the Republic of Indonesia brought together 17,500 islands stretching from west to east the distance equivalent to London-Baghdad.<sup>2</sup> These islands were home to 300 different ethnic groups speaking 200 languages. Though nearly 90 per cent of the population is Muslim, the basis of a

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<sup>1</sup> The term balkanisation was first used to describe the division of the Balkan Peninsula into smaller states in the early twentieth century. Currently, it is referred to break up of a state into smaller political units.

<sup>2</sup> Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting Indonesia's Search for Stability*, (Singapore: Talisman Publishing Ltd., 2004), p. 5-6

common religion failed to transcend other cultural boundaries to unify the Muslim population. Due to the sensitivity of ethnicity and the fear of state disintegration, the post-colonial government has never conducted a popular census on the basis of ethnic affiliation.<sup>3</sup> Only rough guesses can be made based on the 1930 census conducted during the colonial period. The sensitivity towards the issue is understandable. Secessionism is not a unique feature of the present but has challenged the Indonesian state throughout the post-colonial period.

The possibility of secession occurs when ‘the boundaries of an ethnic group and the boundaries of the state do not coincide’<sup>4</sup>. The ultimate goal of a secessionist group is ultimately at odds with the state. With the aim to secede comes the destruction of the territorial boundaries of the state it wishes to divorce from. However, it is a paradox how the struggle between one secessionist group and its central government vary in outcome. While some have successfully achieved their goal of declaring an independent state, others continue with their struggle.

Because there are both failed and successful cases of secession in Indonesia, it provides a good case study. Two secessionist movements in Indonesia, namely East Timor and Aceh have been long standing movements since the late 1960s. Under the rule of the New Order, these secessionist movements were suppressed by military means. It was after the downfall of Soeharto and the New Order that East Timor became the only successful movement, declaring its independence. It is now known as Timor Leste. On the other hand, Aceh still remains a part of the Republic of Indonesia

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<sup>3</sup> Leo Suryadinata, *Elections and Politics in Indonesia*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), p. 2

<sup>4</sup> Don MacIver (eds.), *The Politics of Multinational States*, (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1999), p. 1

and their fight for independence continues. This study aims to explain the effectiveness of the state in managing secessionism.

East Timor's territorial status is a contentious issue. East Timor was a former Portuguese colony and annexed by Indonesia in 1975. Though under Indonesian control between 1975 and 1999, the UN had recognised East Timor as a non-self-governing territory, administered by Portugal.<sup>5</sup> From 1982, at the request of the General Assembly, successive Secretaries-General held regular talks with Indonesia and Portugal aimed at resolving the status of the territory.<sup>6</sup> However though East Timor's status as a disputed territory remained; the reality of the situation was that its people were fighting for independence from the de facto control of the Indonesian state. The struggle for statehood against the Indonesian state cannot be regarded as any less real regardless of the territorial status of East Timor or the legality of Indonesian state's rule over the half island. I address the process of the 1975 annexation in more detail in Chapter Four.

Though the legality of the East Timor's territorial status remained disputed, I use the term secessionism to describe East Timor struggles to free itself from the control of the Indonesian state. Similar comparative studies on the cases of Aceh, East Timor and West Papua that have been conducted by Edward Aspinall and Mark T. Berger have also used the term secessionist to describe the three movements.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations, 'Trust and Non-self-governing territories', <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpi/decolonization/trust2.htm#2>, accessed 6 May 2007

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, 'United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor – Background', [http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co\\_mission/background.html](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/background.html), accessed 6 May 2007

<sup>7</sup> Edward Aspinall and Mark T. Berger, 'The break-up of Indonesia? Nationalisms after Decolonization and the limits of the nation-state in post-cold war Southeast Asia', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No.6, December 2001

Defining 'secessionism' is problematic and contested. However among the many definitions of secession, there is a common understanding that the term is intertwined with territory. Often the term secessionism is used as an umbrella term to refer to a group that aims for an independent state whether it be an immediate or a temporary form of self-government while still respecting the boundaries of the existing state. Scholars such as Alexis Heraclides uses secessionism to refer to 'an abrupt unilateral move to independence on the part of the region that is a metropolitan territory of a sovereign state'<sup>8</sup>. Though he clearly states at the beginning that a secessionist group's ultimate aim is independence he continues to make the distinction between secession *stricto sensu* and incremental secessionism that differs in terms of its aims and formality of such aims. Secession *stricto sensu* is defined as 'a formal act of declaration of independence on the part of the region in question while incremental secession is still in 'process' and has no formal declaration that may aim for a separate state or a form of self-rule still respecting the boundaries of the state. He also stresses the importance of using the term secessionism to refer to a group that only 'poses a credible threat to the centre' whether it aims for independence or self-government'<sup>9</sup>. A secessionist group that does not pose a credible threat as such should be referred to as a secession front. Likewise, Ralph R. Premdas also notes the two alternatives of immediate outright divorce from the existing state and internal self-government; however, he does not make a clear distinction between the two.<sup>10</sup>

Incorporating the acts of groups that are calling for independence with those aiming for a deal that falls short of sovereignty under the term secession can be potentially

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<sup>8</sup> Alexis Heraclides, *The Self-Determination of Minorities in International Politics*, (London: Frank Cass, 1991), p.1

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.1-2

<sup>10</sup> Ralph R. Premdas, S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe and Alan B. Anderson (eds.), *Secessionist Movements in Perspective*, (London: Pinter, 1990), p. 12-16

confusing while failing to acknowledge the differences in characteristics, goals and aims of both. While both are considered to have the characteristics of an ethnic conflict and are interlinked with territory, the acts of separatism and secessionism are directed at different goals.<sup>11</sup> Some scholars clearly recognise the difference of the terms separatism and secessionism. Horowitz utilises separatism as an umbrella term to refer to ethnic demands for a separate state as well as power sharing arrangements such as autonomy.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, MacIver takes a clear view that secession 'occurs when a territory and its people break away from a state and establish a new politically independent society with a government of its own and claim statehood'<sup>13</sup>. However, he makes use of the term 'separatism' in a generic sense that refers to 'ethno-nationalist movements' that vary in terms of their demands from the state that includes calls for self-government. The two territories in question, East Timor and Aceh both struggled to claim statehood from the Indonesian state. Though political and normative meanings attach to various concepts surrounding the field of ethnic based conflicts, by using the term secessionism I am not taking a normative view on the territorial status of Indonesia or East Timor. The aim of this study is to contribute to the field of ethnic conflicts and not theories of secession which are based on normative debates on whether a territory should have the right to claim statehood. I have selected the term secession due to the nature of the research that aims study the struggles and interactions between two groups of people that seek to claim statehood. I have discounted other concepts surrounding the field of ethnic conflicts such as separatism, ethnicity and nationalism which lack clarity given the nature and aims of this study. However, in the following sections I consider them as alternative terms.

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<sup>11</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (London: University of California Press, 1985), p. 230-1

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 231

<sup>13</sup> MacIver (ed.), *The Politics of Multinational States*, p. 17-23

## *Separatism and Ethnicity*

The concept of secessionism and separatism are often used interchangeable. However, the term separatism is too broad to be used as a key term in this study. Separatism is an umbrella term that refers to 'ethno-nationalist movements' that vary in terms of their demands from the state that includes calls for self-government.<sup>14</sup> Separatism can range from cultural separatism to territorial separatism. As such, separatism becomes unsuitable for the more specific aims of GAM and Fretilin which aim to seek independence.

Other definitions such as ethnicity are also inappropriate for this study. The definition of ethnic group and ethnicity becomes clearer when compared to nation. Attempts to distinguish the differences between 'ethnic group' and 'nation' have been made but often lead to further confusion. James G. Kellas notes that an ethnic group is different from a nation as 'they are usually smaller; they are clearly based on common ancestry; and they are more pervasive in human history, while nations are perhaps more specific to time and place'<sup>15</sup>. Though Kellas did not make a clear-cut generalization, using size as a criterion to differentiate ethnic group from nation can be misleading. If the Han Chinese were considered as an ethnic group, we would find that the Han Chinese population of 1,040 million people would far exceed those many nation-states such as Barbados (pop. 255,000) or even Slovenia (pop. 1,940,000).<sup>16</sup> Using common ancestry is not always helpful as nationalisms (the ideology of the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 17-23

<sup>15</sup> James G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 4

<sup>16</sup> Steve Fenton and Stephen May (eds.), *Ethnonational Identities*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 1

nation) can be categorized into civic or territorial nationalisms that are associated with heterogeneity or boundaries of the state; and ethnic nationalisms that coincide with a particular ethnic group.<sup>17</sup> Finally, differentiating ethnic group and nation by noting that an ethnic group is generally more persistent, more or less highlights the debates between the primordialists on one hand, and those who argue for the fluidity of ethnicity and nationalism on the other, rather than identifying the differences between an ethnic group and nation per se. The primordialists would maintain that the origins of an ethnic group and nation are natural and fixed while the modernists would agree that both categories are socially constructed or invented in a particular context.

Distinguishing the two concepts, ethnic group and nation, is no easy task as both share a number of characteristics. Both are collectivities whose members presume a particular identity and draw boundaries vis-à-vis 'the other'. Both are often viewed as political acts. On the other hand, though both concepts may overlap in many ways, the boundaries of a 'nation' and 'ethnic group' become clearer once the nation is referred to in respect of its relationship with the state. As Eriksen notes: 'A nationalist holds that political boundaries should be coterminous with cultural boundaries, whereas an ethnic group do not demand command over the state. When the political leaders of an ethnic movement make demands to this effect, the ethnic movement therefore by definition becomes a nationalist movement'<sup>18</sup>. Horowitz notes that the demands for a separate state or secession partakes many characteristic of an ethnic conflict.<sup>19</sup> However, Eriksen continues to note that this can also be problematic when the objectives of a collectivity are not unified. When some may demand full

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<sup>17</sup> See Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 82

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism Anthropologist Perspectives*, (London: Pluto Press, 1993), p. 6

<sup>19</sup> Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, p. 230

independence, others may be content with something less. As such, the distinction between nation and ethnic group become blurred.<sup>20</sup>

As such, ethnicity is a political construction of an ethnic group which does not necessarily mobilise its population or seek independence over a certain territory. In this respect, ethnicity shares similarities with the concept of separatism.

### *Nationalism*

The act of claiming a separate state is based on nationalism. Despite claims made by the modernists that nationalism will soon die down along with the process of modernisation, it has continued to disrupt and have profound effects on security. Surprisingly, nationalism was adopted as a topic of academic interest with the upsurge of anti-colonial movements in the 1960s.<sup>21</sup> Contemporary debates began searching for explanations as to the origins, causes and types yet there is very little consensus on these issues as well as defining the boundaries of the concept itself. In fact, defining nationalism is difficult. Difficult because the term is used to cover an array of social phenomena that widely differ in terms of objectives and characteristics. Hence, like many other concepts, nationalism cannot be reduced to a single meaning.

Many scholars including John Breuilly propose categorising the various types of nationalisms. On the other hand, Umut Ozkirimli adopts an umbrella definition. He notes that there cannot be 'one nationalism' but many as different members of the

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<sup>20</sup> Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism Anthropologist Perspectives*, p. 119

<sup>21</sup> John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds.) *Nationalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 3



nation construct different concepts of the nation. Hence, there can only be discourses of nationalism, consequently, giving three common dominators among nationalist discourses.<sup>22</sup> In this respect, it would also be impossible to come up with a single grand theory to explain the many types of nationalisms. Though these issues are still contested, it should be noted that it has been widely accepted, with the exception of the ethno-symbolists<sup>23</sup> and the primordialists<sup>24</sup>, that nationalism is a modern phenomenon with its roots in the process of modernisation.

Is this to give up any attempt to build on any theoretical explanations of nationalism and its causes? Instead, Craig Calhoun approaches the study of nationalism with a number of theories to study the various aspects of nationalism. As he notes:

Nationalism is a rhetoric for speaking about too many different things for a single theory to explain it- let alone to explain each of those different movements, cultural movements, state policies or other projects shaped in part by the rhetoric of nationalism. This does not mean that theory is not needed, but rather that grasping nationalism in its multiplicity of forms requires multiple theories.<sup>25</sup>

Calhoun makes a useful starting point for approaching nationalism. However, to go through the exhaustive list of the various types of nationalisms and theories put forward by the many scholars in the field is beyond the scope of this study. Rather, this study will adopt Ernest Gellner's definition of nationalism: 'Nationalism is

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<sup>22</sup> Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: a critical introduction*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 228-230

<sup>23</sup> For example, Anthony D. Smith

<sup>24</sup> For example, Clifford Geertz and Edward Shils

<sup>25</sup> Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism*, (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997), p. 8

primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should congruent<sup>26</sup>. This appropriately fits the types of nationalisms discussed in this study. It is what should constitute the boundaries of the 'national' that has led to contentions between the government and the secessionist movements in Indonesia. The government holds that the national should include all within the boundaries of the former Dutch Indies. This is consistent with Anthony D. Smith's definition of territorial nationalism which he equates with post-independent movements that seek to integrate a population of diverse ethnic groups of a former colony.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, secessionism would fit the definition of ethnic nationalisms that coincide with an ethnic group. Hence, a part of the problem is the different constructions of the 'national' of the respective agents which has introduced the contention between the government and the respective secessionist movements.

This tells us that nationalism in this respect is a subjectively constructed principle. However, though nationalism is a modern phenomenon, the ideas of the nation are often not as new as the concept itself.<sup>28</sup> Nationalism is commonly constructed on claims of ancestral territories, ancient language, religion, myth or a recent common past.<sup>29</sup> It is common that the nation should draw on ethnic elements yet the nation does not necessarily have to coincide with an ethnic group as noted earlier. If conceptions of the nation are constructed, the members of the nation may give a faint or hazy picture of the constructions of the nation and even national identity. However, some form of togetherness still exists. As Smith quite rightly notes: 'National identity

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<sup>26</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p. 1

<sup>27</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, p. 82

<sup>28</sup> Calhoun, *Nationalism*, p. 29

<sup>29</sup> Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p 67-75

involves some sense of political community however tenuous<sup>30</sup>. This has led some modernists such as Gellner and Hobsbawm to make claims that constructions of the nation are fabricated or artificial. However, this has been disputed by Anderson who claims that ‘imagining’ or constructing nationalism does not necessarily imply that it is any less real.<sup>31</sup> As Anderson notes ‘...over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings’<sup>32</sup>.

It also should be noted that having a faint idea of the conceptions of the nation and having different conceptions of national identity does not correlate with the intensity of the nationalist movement. As Vernon Hewitt argues on-going conflict in Kashmir is not simply a matter of India and Pakistan making claims over the region ‘but the overwhelming difficulty of defining a stable Kashmiri identity, either within India and Pakistan, or within any future independent sovereign state’<sup>33</sup>. Many such as Anderson and Gellner hold that language is often constructed as an element of a nation. However, often those who claim their identity within a particular nation may not even speak the language. National identity becomes important when it seems under threat due to the processes of modernization such as migration, economic change<sup>34</sup> or worse, violence and injustice. Yet, the process of constructing or re-producing the nation will remain. As Siegel rightly notes: ... ‘to feel propelled out of an original situation and to find a resolution to that effects of that push that confers a certain identity.’<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, p. 9

<sup>31</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and the spread of Nationalism* revised edition, (London: Verso, 1991)

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7

<sup>33</sup> Vernon Hewitt, ‘An Area of Darkness, Still? The Political Evolution of Ethnic Identities in Jammu and Kashmir, 1947-2001’ in Fenton and May (eds.), *Ethnonational Identities*, p.129

<sup>34</sup> Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p. 68

<sup>35</sup> Siegel, *The Rope of God*, p. 366

Nationalism is an ideology which believes that the boundaries of the nation should coincide with the boundaries of the state.<sup>36</sup> Though the basis of the struggles of the East Timorese and the Acehnese are nationalistic, the aim of this study is not so much concerned with the constructions of contesting nationalisms but rather the act and struggles of claiming statehood and the containment of these struggles by the state.

Nationalism is an important background term but it has relatively little purchase on the mechanisms used for managing the territorial integrity of the state. East Timor gained its independence after the downfall of Soeharto. In Aceh, there has been a departure from the sole use of military means to suppress secessionism used during the New Order. Under the post-Soeharto governments, the centre has responded to secessionism with a mixture of concessions and military operations. After years of mixed policies from the Indonesian government, both sides have finally agreed to a peace settlement which includes the offer of self-government and local elections. The different outcomes in the two secessionist regions of East Timor and Aceh beg the following question: what determines the state's effectiveness in managing secessionism?

The state-in-society approach holds that the interactions between the state and societal forces shape state effectiveness to carry out its goals in managing ethnic relations. Furthermore, the state is not autonomous from external pressure. It is these two forces that determine the state's effectiveness to act. It is based on these assumptions that I form the central hypothesis of this study: *where social control by the state is high and*

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<sup>36</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p. 1

*there is an absence of external pressure to support the secessionist movement, the state will have more manoeuvrability to achieve its goals, or in other words, maintain the boundaries of the state regardless of how it wants to achieve this goal.*

Hence, I propose to examine the characteristics of state response to secessionism through the interactions of the three clusters of power: society, the state and external pressure. More specifically, I will examine the changes in the independent variables: the relative strength of the secessionist movement and external pressure which in turn affects state effectiveness to achieve its goals. The success or failure of the state to maintain the boundaries the state are the central dependent variables.

I will examine the cases of East Timor and Aceh which have been long-standing secessionist movements in Indonesia. However though East Timor is now currently known as Timor Leste, I will continue to use the term 'East Timor' as it was known while it was fighting for independence and for the sake of consistency. There have been secessionist movements emerging in other regions such as Riau. However, these movements were often short-lived and never gained much support from the population they claimed to represent. Though ethnic identity is fluid and 'changes intensity over time'<sup>37</sup>, these cases are deemed unsuitable for this study because they lack unclear support and demands for a separate state. It is also for this reason I do not include the case of Papua, which at the start of this project, did not have substantial support for independence. The two secessionist regions also differ from other regions such as Ambon where ethnic discontent is not aimed at the government but channelled towards another ethnic group.

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<sup>37</sup> Bjorn Hettne, 'Ethnicity and Development-an elusive relationship', *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1993, p. 125

In the following sections of this chapter, I will first locate the problem within the discipline. Then, I will explain why the state-in-society approach is a useful analytical tool to explore centre-regional relations. Thereafter, I will examine the existing literature on Indonesia in general and how this study contributes to the existing literature.

### **Locating the Problem in the Discipline**

Secessionism has posed a problem to the Indonesian state since independence. However, only one territory, East Timor, has achieved its goal of declaring an independent state. Aceh had been fighting for independence until the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) had reached a peace agreement with the government after the tsunami devastated much of the region. The success of one secessionist movement in declaring an independent state shows that the state has been less effective in maintaining its territorial boundaries in comparison to the Aceh as well as other cases that are fighting for independence. This begs the question what determines state effectiveness in achieving its goals?

Models of secession are abundant and have been used to explain center-regional relations. Eric Eugene Morris' PhD on center-regional relations in Indonesia focusing on Aceh uses the reactive system model to explain 'the emergence or absence of a subsystem solidarity in opposition to the policies of the encompassing the center'<sup>38</sup>. The theoretical model used in Morris' PhD is perhaps suited for his research question:

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<sup>38</sup> Eric Eugene Morris, *Islam and Politics in Aceh: A Study of Centre-Periphery Relations in Indonesia*, Thesis submitted to Cornell University, 1983, p. 9

‘why do the Acehnese act the way they did in the context of the Indonesian state?’<sup>39</sup>

Though the topic of inquiry in my own thesis is the struggle between secessionist movements and the state, the models of secession used by Morris are unsuited for the research question posed in this thesis.

The literature on secessionism is heavily influenced by the literature on ethnicity and nationalism. This includes scholars who can be characterised as primordialists, ethno-symbolists and modernists. All engage in the question of what causes ethnicity and nationalism to emerge. Whereas models of secession are focussed on explaining causality of secessionism, it is modernist theories exploring the complexities of ethnicity and nationalism which have claimed dominance in the field. In general, models of ethnic mobilisation towards the centre are premised on the idea that nations and nationalisms are a product of the onset of modernity and are produced by modern forces such as capitalism, industrialisation, and the bureaucratic state.<sup>40</sup> To believe that nationalisms never occurred in the pre-modern era ultimately meant modernists would agree that ‘nationalisms come before nations’<sup>41</sup>.

Among other contending models of ethnic conflict, theorists have also sought to underpin the causality of ethnic conflict with class analysis. Class analysis is a popular explanation for the root cause of secessionism and the issues of class and ethnicity have been subject to debates.

Class can be used to offer explanations of structural change. Linking the conception

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 2

<sup>40</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalisms in a Global Era*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 89

<sup>41</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 10

of class and ethnicity would examine how one ethnic group is subordinate to the other, and the competition between the subordinate and the superordinate for power in the economy and the polity determines the redistribution of resources. Horowitz's comparative model of ranked and unranked groups captures these elements of class exceptionally well.<sup>42</sup> Unranked groups transpire when boundaries of an ethnic group transcends class. Consequently, conflicts between groups take form of what Horowitz labels the politics of inclusion and exclusion. When class and the boundaries of an ethnic group overlap, it is possible to refer to this hierarchal ranking as ranked groups. Here, one ethnic group is subordinate to another. Within the context where class and ethnicity coincide, social revolution can potentially break out when the subordinate group competes for power and resources.

Similarly, Michael Hechter's model of 'internal colonialism' incorporates a neo-marxist point of view and makes an impact on the field of nationalism.<sup>43</sup> Hechter's internal colonialism has focussed on the importance of economic factors to the emergence of nationalism. He argues that the centre exploits the periphery which causes the periphery to mobilise against the centre. This model assumes that the unevenness of development creates a gap between the advanced and less advanced groups. The advanced group then allocates high-ranking positions to members within its own group. It is the sense of deprivation that ignites a sense of nationalism whereby the less advanced group demands a separatist state.<sup>44</sup>

The idea of secession is in line with the idea of class that stresses the importance of

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<sup>42</sup> See Donald L. Horowitz, 'The Three Dimensions of Ethnic Politics', *World Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 2, January 1971; and Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, p. 21-32

<sup>43</sup> Michael Hechter, *Internal colonialism: the Celtic fringe in British national development, 1536-1966*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975)

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9



domination and subordination as well as the redistribution of resources and power. As the Javanese constitute almost half of the Indonesian population and during the 1970s and 1980s held key positions in the military and the bureaucracy, leaders of the secessionist movements such as GAM often cite Javanese dominance and colonialism in their cause for independence. However, equating a secessionist movement with a particular class is problematic. Firstly, unlike class, secessionist regions are rarely uniform in their interests and their goals. Though class interests can be redefined to incorporate the interests of the subordinate class interests, groups within one secessionist region differ fundamentally in terms of goals ranging from territorial separation to status quo. Thirdly, not all secession regions are entirely subordinate to the centre especially Aceh which is internally stratified. Unlike East Timor and Papua, Acehnese elites are represented at the centre. For example, prominent Acehnese academic Sjamsuddin Nazaruddin currently holds the position of the head of the National Election Commission (KPU). Furthermore, goals are not identifiable with a particular class. While some Acehnese elites of the entrepreneurial class have aligned themselves with the centre, others have joined the secessionist movement, consequently, cutting across class boundaries. Finally, class analysis does not capture the dynamics, fluidity and popular support for independence. Though secessionist movements have erupted because ethnic groups are excluded from economic and political gains within the state, other factors such as the brutality of the military have also played a factor in increased popular support. Aceh, East Timor and Papua are examples of this.

This is not to deny the importance of economic factors in ethnic conflicts. However, such explanations should not be given overall prominence. Economic deprivation is

an important causal factor for an ethnic groups to mobilise against another group or the centre, though is not sufficient. The close association between modernity and nationalism has been noted in the literature, though the nature of this connection has been subject to debate.<sup>45</sup> Ethnic discontent has emerged due to economic deprivation or lack of social mobility in the modern state. However, overemphasising economic grievances would attract criticisms of being reductionist. Though, his study is confined to the period between 1950-1958, Hans O. Schmitt has attributed the source of ethnic conflict to the unevenness of development between Java and the Outer Islands.<sup>46</sup> It might also be argued that the logic underlying the autonomy package first offered in 1999 reflected the idea among policy-makers in Jakarta that there was a strong correlation between the centralised system and economic disparity on one hand, and ethnic discontent on the other.

Though policy-makers and academics have highlighted economic factors as a prominent cause of ethnic mobilisation against the centre explaining the problem in terms of class interests can be problematic. Such explanations have reduced the emergence of ethnic mobilisation to purely economic inequalities which fail to account for other rich regions that have not mobilised against the centre. As one economist has wryly observed that if Indonesia were to disintegrate, there would be 'four oil-rich Bruneis', 'a dozen or so Bangladeshes' and rest would just manage to get by.<sup>47</sup> Though Aceh and Papua are classified as Bruneis, this does not explain why the other two Bruneis have not mobilised against Jakarta. This also fails to explain

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<sup>45</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: colonial and postcolonial histories*, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 5-13

<sup>46</sup> See Hans O. Schmitt, 'Foreign Capital and Social Conflict in Indonesia 1950-1958', *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 10, no. 3, April 1962

<sup>47</sup> Harold Crouch, 'The Key Determinants of Indonesia's Political Future', *Trends in Southeast Asia August 2002*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001), p.3

why East Timor, which has been excluded from the list of the rich regions, has engaged in a long fight for independence until it gained its independence.

The main purpose of theories of nationalism with Marxist elements or class analysis is to explain why nations and nationalisms emerge. Consequently, they do not give an explanation to why states respond differently to secessionism. Neither do they give any useful insights as to state effectiveness in achieving their goals towards secessionist movements. At most, it is based on these explanations that theories of ethnic conflict management attempt to suggest a possible fix to the situation, for example, autonomy, consociationalism, or federalism. However, there is a possibility that the state may not remedy the situation by accommodating nationalist sentiment. Instead, the state may opt to suppress ethnic conflict through military means. As such, these theories fail to capture the dynamics beyond the emergence of nationalism. They fail to explain why some secessionist movements have seceded while others have failed. Or explain why in some cases the implementation of autonomy has lessened ethnic discontent while in other cases autonomy have failed to make a positive impact on the conflict.

Secession is about a national movement that struggles with the existing to state to form a state of its own. At the very least, it is about the struggle to redefine the distribution of power within the state. With success, the struggle redefines the boundaries of state. However, when ethnic conflicts become explosive and threaten stability, the international community may intervene on humanitarian grounds; hereby, limiting the state's autonomy to carry out policies to manage ethnic relations. As such, the study of secession is situated where domestic politics meet international

relations.<sup>48</sup>

However, there is a lack of convergence between the two disciplines on the theoretical level. Issues surrounding ethnic politics involve debates in the areas of nationalism and power-sharing arrangements to lessen ethnic grievances. Both are confined to centre-regional relations. Theories of nationalism explore the causal factors of ethnic mobilisation. Studies of ethnic conflict management explore mechanisms such as federalism and autonomy which provide possible solutions to ethnic grievances.

Scholars of the field of international relations have argued that the term ‘international relations’ no longer suits or defines the expanding scope of the study which has formerly centred around the state as the main unit of analysis; consequently, arguing for the term to be replaced with ‘global politics’.<sup>49</sup> Though recent development of the field has expanded, incorporating non-state actors, no theory of international relations provides an insight as to what inhibits and enhances the success of secession at the international level.

Do theories of secession have any useful implications for the interplay between secessionist movement and the state? Theories of secession are formulated around the normative issue of whether a right to secede exists and under what condition. Margaret Moore’s edited volume discusses the issue of self-determination from two perspectives: from the claims of normative theorists of secession and from the

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<sup>48</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1985), p. 230

<sup>49</sup> Scott Burchill, Richard Devetak, Andrew Linklater, Matthew Paterson, Christain Reus-Smit and Jacqui True, *Theories of International Relations 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 9

perspective of nationalists.<sup>50</sup> It is the relationship between liberalism and nationalism that underlies the philosophical debates of whether a nation should have the right to form its own state and under what conditions may this permission be made.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Percy B. Lehning's *Theories of Secession* examines the issue of secession using existing western political theories.

However, there is a significant gap between what ought to be and reality. Political theorists have generally allowed more leeway for secession, more than are allowed by states and international norms.<sup>52</sup> In other words, normative political theories do not recognise the constraints that have a bearing on the right to secede or the international legal right. As Allen Buchanan argues political theories lack an institutional dimension.<sup>53</sup> His concern is developing a just international legal framework. Still, this innovation does not address the issues of what enhances or limits the success of secession.

### **Why State-in-Society Approach?**

So far I have established that theories of ethnicity and nationalism are unsuitable for this study because the majority of these theories aim to explain causality of the emergence of nationalism as opposed to the on-going dynamics between the state and the secessionist group in question. Secessionism is a study of where domestic and

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<sup>50</sup> Margaret Moore (ed.), *National Self-Determination and Secession*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 2

<sup>52</sup> Percy B. Lehning (ed.), *Theories of Secession*, (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 27

<sup>53</sup> Allen Buchanan's arguments have appeared in a number of edited volumes including 'The international institutional dimension of secession' in Lehning (ed.), *Theories of Secession*; and 'Democracy and Secession' in Moore (ed.), *National Self-Determination and Secession*. His argument can also be found in his work, *Secession: The Morality of Political Divorce from Fort Sumter to Lithuania and Quebec* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1991)

international politics become entangled. It also needs to acknowledge that both the state and the secessionist possess the ability to act, though their capabilities may vary in achieving their goals. In the section above, I have illustrated how existing theories of international relations, secessionism, ethnicity, and nationalism often fail to incorporate the three levels of analysis. Because this study poses the question: what determines state effectiveness in managing secessionism and for the reasons above, I will explore the main schools of state theory that acknowledge the capability of secessionist movement and the state.

Elitism is premised on thought that the characteristics of society are shaped or determined by its elites. Thus, the assumptions of elitism challenge the core beliefs of liberalism and the relationship between the state and society premised on western liberal thought; and reject Marxian assumptions that the state is an instrument of the working class.<sup>54</sup> The nature of Indonesia's institutions such as Golkar during the New Order (which will be later discussed in Chapter Three) does echo elements of corporatism, a strand of modern elitism. Corporatism occurs when the interests of the state and private interests converge. However, though elites in many non-western regimes as well as Indonesia under Soeharto come close to the elitist model, the model does not acknowledge the ability of society to carry out its actions especially secessionist movements of this study which were not incorporated within institutions of the Indonesian state. Rather, these movements formed a group independent of the state in order to challenge state policies and the territorial boundaries of the state. Likewise, statist or state-centric approaches which argue for the autonomy of the state also run into the same problems of neglecting the capability of society to carry out its

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<sup>54</sup> Mark Evans, 'Elitism', in David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), p. 228

actions.<sup>55</sup>

On the opposite side of the spectrum, Marxism views the state as a tool of society. The dynamics between society and the state are determined by economic power relations and are played out during two junctures: the first being between the feudal lords and capitalist bourgeoisie that is followed by the bourgeoisie and proletariat. The state takes on the role as a regulator of class conflicts and accumulates capital. By regulating class conflict the state is an arena where class conflicts occur, thus, reducing the state as a passive actor of the dominant classes.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, conventional Marxism does not fully acknowledge the capacity of the state to act.

Furthermore, elements of class conflict and economic determinism are found in theories of ethnicity and nationalism which can be found in the works of Nairn and Hecter. Earlier, I have devoted attention to these theories which only partially explain the root grievances of ethnic groups. Economic deprivation though crucial cannot be taken as a sufficient explanation for ethnic grievances. Furthermore as the main purpose of these theories is to explain causality of the emergence of nationalism, these theories do not give an explanation to why states respond differently to secessionism. Thus, such explanations fail to capture the on-going dynamics between the state and secessionist movements in question; consequently, are deemed unsuitable for this study.

Finally, the pluralists argue that no group can dominant society. The state poses the

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<sup>55</sup> See Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

<sup>56</sup> Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power Volume II the rise of classes and nation-states, 1760-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 45

role of a regulator of conflicts within society as opposed to being a dominant actor with aims to carry out its aims and interests.<sup>57</sup> Both society and the state are perceived as fragmented. This fragmented society possesses different resources in order to carry out its different interests. Pluralist theories recognises diversity in society as well as institutional and ideological practices.<sup>58</sup> However, it has often been the case that the state can carry out its initiatives that fail to reflect societal demands.<sup>59</sup> As a consequence, pluralism refuses to recognise the autonomy or relative autonomy of the state to carry out its own initiatives. Power lies within society where it is diverse, comprising of varied interests possessing the power to influence or control the state. As Michael Mann rightly notes, the state becomes an arena and not an actor in its own right.<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, the general literature surrounding the issue of state capability to carry out actions in developing countries are premised on the concept of the 'weak state'. Weak state analyses generally exemplify a state that is on the verge of becoming a failed state and is more or less dependent on foreign intervention. This characterisation has very few implications for Indonesia.

Weak state analyses are mostly associated with Barry Buzan's influential study, *People, States and Fear*. The weak state refers to a state that lacks the legitimacy in the western liberal sense in two fundamental aspects: the idea of the state and the institutions. When the state has failed to create an atmosphere of social and political

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<sup>57</sup> Martin Smith 'Pluralism', in David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), p. 211

<sup>58</sup> Patrick Dunleavy and Brendan O'Leary, *Theories of the State the politics of liberal democracy*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1987), p. 13

<sup>59</sup> Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, p. 4

<sup>60</sup> Mann, *The Sources of Social Power Volume II the rise of classes and nation-states, 1760-1914*, p. 47



cohesiveness, the state's main security concerns are domestic. Buzan also differentiates weak and strong states with weak and strong powers which refers to a state's military and economic capability in relation to one another.<sup>61</sup>

The arguments are convincing. What is commonly shared amongst former colonies is the construction of the state that preceded the construction of the nation, hereby, making 'the idea of the state' weak. At the time of emotionally charged nationalism that drove out the western colonialists, the leaders of the newly independent states enjoyed the support of the people. However, this source of legitimacy did wear down. Various regions in Indonesia supported the nationalist movement against the Dutch; even the Acehnese played a strong role and supported the movement financially. The unity of the nation continued after the Dutch left as the majority of Indonesians were united against wiping out the Dutch imposed federal system.<sup>62</sup> The hostile reaction was not against the political system as such but against the 'alien-imposed'<sup>63</sup> one.

However, a hostile reaction to the Dutch was not the only reason why the diverse nation came together. As Michael Leifer notes: '...Indonesian nationalism developed not only in a characteristically negative reaction to the colonial rule but also a positive reaction to the territorial bounds of the colonial state which were assimilated wholesale into nationalist claim'<sup>64</sup>. Yet what initially bound the diverse nation

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<sup>61</sup> See Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991)

<sup>62</sup> There were some regions they did not join the Unitarian movement. These regions had strong attachments to the Dutch such as the South Moluccas.

<sup>63</sup> George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1952), p. 452; For a selection of arguments made by regional leaders against the Dutch imposed federal structure see Herbert Feith and Lance Castles (eds.), *Indonesian Political Thinking 1945-1965*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), National Unity and the Ethnic and Regional Groups

<sup>64</sup> Michael Leifer, 'The Changing Temper of Indonesian Nationalism' in Michael Leifer (ed.), *Asian Nationalism*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 158

together gradually lost its importance and secessionism in various regions has emerged and disappeared and have re-emerged throughout post-colonial history. Similarly, the institutions of post-colonial states were weak. Did this lead to social and political chaos in Indonesia? Subsequently, was internal security the main concern of the state?

Weak state analysis does represent a state on the brink of disintegrating which may depend on foreign intervention to maintain the survival of the state. According to Buzan's study, Indonesia does contain the elements of the weak state and internal security was its main concern especially during the New Order; however, this has not led to a lack of social and political cohesiveness where Indonesia is dependent on foreign support. This dependency in turn does not acknowledge state autonomy. Consequently, Buzan's analysis has failed to capture the dynamics of the weak state where in some situations the state possesses the ability to manage its own internal affairs despite the multiplicity of problems that the government is facing. On the other hand, in other situations the state may be less effective in carrying out actions. Furthermore, weak state theories are deemed unsuitable for this thesis because they are state-centric and do not account for the capacity of society to penetrate the state.

Due to the diversity of states, Muthiah Alagappa notes that the term 'weak state' portrayed by weak state analysts is 'far from the prototypical Third World state described by these analysts'<sup>65</sup>. Furthermore, such studies place emphasis on the state while undermining social agency. Categorising states under the 'weak' and 'strong'

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<sup>65</sup> Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Practice Material and Ideational Influences*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 647-649

dichotomy fails to acknowledge that there is a long continuum of states.<sup>66</sup> Placing all these states under the same label has failed to take into account the differences between all these states as well as the various aspects within a state that may differ in terms of strength and weakness. Peter Dauvergne quite rightly argues that states are not ideal types and possess elements of strengths and weaknesses that are subject to fluctuation over time.<sup>67</sup>

The state-in-society approach offers an alternative explanation to the strengths and weaknesses of the developing state or what Migdal terms as *domination and change*.<sup>68</sup> The strength or weakness of the state varies according to how the state interacts with diverse social groups. The strength of the state is reflective of the state's ability to impose policies, rules and norms. On the other hand, a state becomes weak when society possesses the ability to push forward its demands which in turn transforms the state's policies, rules and norms.<sup>69</sup>

The state-in society approach explores the patterns of domination or 'the recurring ways in which some may use violence, threats, and other means to make others behave in ways they would have not otherwise chosen'<sup>70</sup> and the changes in those patterns of domination. The state, for state-in society theorists, differs from definitions that are closely associated with the Weberian model. For them, the state 'is a field of

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<sup>66</sup> Christopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System The Politics of the State Survival*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 15; and Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Practice*, p. 647-648

<sup>67</sup> Peter Dauvergne (ed.), *Weak and Strong States in Asia-Pacific Societies*, (Canberra, ACT: Allen & Unwin in association with the Department of International Relations, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 1998), p. 1-9

<sup>68</sup> My own emphasis. Migdal, *State in Society Studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*, p. 3

<sup>69</sup> Dauvergne (ed.), *Weak and Strong States in Asia-Pacific Societies*, p. 2

<sup>70</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*, p. 3

power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by (1) *the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by that territory*, and (2) *the actual practices of its multiple parts*<sup>71</sup>.

The image of the state is that 'of a dominant, integrated, autonomous entity that controls, in a given territory, all rule making, either directly through its agencies or indirectly by sanctioning other organizations- businesses, families, clubs, and the like- to make certain circumscribed rules'<sup>72</sup>. In turn, this image stimulates the perception that the state acts in a uniform manner. However, the actual practices of state agencies may be implemented in such a way that fortifies the cohesive image of the state.

State-in-society assumes that segments of the state can ally with one another as well with groups outside official state borders to enhance their capability to achieve their goals. As such, the state and society are not necessarily on opposing ends but can mutually empower one another. The theoretical ideas brought forward by the state-in-society approach not only takes into account the fluidity of the state effectiveness to carry out actions but also recognises the secessionist movement as an actor in its own right. The main assumption is that states are embedded in their society.

The state-in-society approach shares similarities with group theory such as the broker state model. According to the broker state perspective, public policy is a result of pressure groups interacting with the state apparatus. As Patrick Dunleavy and Brendan O'Leary sum up: 'The broker 'state' is not a distinct organisation, easily demarcated from society. It is not passive, neutral or indeed a 'blackbox'. It consists of multiple formal and informal pressure group activities; of coalitions and bargains

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p. 16

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p. 16

struck, dishonoured and reconstituted; and extends into the interactions which take place amidst the equally multiple activities, coalitions and bargains amongst non-state pressure groups'.<sup>73</sup> Though pluralists using the broker state model do not exactly follow Migdal's perception of the state with practices that contradicts its image, they accept that the state is internally incoherent. Administrations, financial and military bureaucracies, or what Migdal would otherwise term as state segments, are fragmented and divided.<sup>74</sup> Likewise, the state-in-society approach argues that the state is fragmented and its various parts interact and ally with one another as well as social organisations to achieve their goals.<sup>75</sup>

What differs from the state-in-society approach is that group theorists such as David Truman and Arthur Bentley do not acknowledge that at certain times the state does not have its own interests and may possess the autonomy to carry out actions. For them, though both prefer the term 'government' as opposed to 'state', the state is viewed as a stage or an arena where organised groups interact with one another.<sup>76</sup> As such, the state-in-society approach though bearing considerable resemblance to pluralism, also takes into account the arguments of state-centric models which argue that the state possess autonomy or relative autonomy to carry out its actions.

It is the relationship between the state and societal forces that determine the state effectiveness to carry out actions. Or more central to this study is the effectiveness of the state to fulfill its goals towards a secessionist movement. Hence, I propose to

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<sup>73</sup> Dunleavy and O'Leary, *Theories of the State the politics of liberal democracy*, p. 47

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p. 52

<sup>75</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*, p. 20

<sup>76</sup> Arthur Bentley, *The process of government*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 263; also see David Truman, *The governmental process: political interests and public opinion*, (New York: Knopf, 1951), p. 51

explore the dynamics of centre-regional relations through the state-in-society approach which may reveal some useful insights to the different outcomes of centre-regional relations. However, I also propose that an international dimension to the framework. These international factors include international organisations such as the World Bank and United Nations or other states that may pose to empower or limit the state in its policies in managing secessionism. The analytical framework will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Harold Crouch has also applied Migdal's theoretical ideas to the Indonesian state in Peter Dauvergne's edited volume that specifically looks into Asia Pacific states. However though we use the same theory, Crouch's piece and my own thesis differ in terms of depth, focus, his contribution to and the application of Migdal's theory. Crouch, like the other contributing authors, is concerned with how states interact with their societies. He mainly focuses on the characteristics of the state namely its strength and weaknesses in relation to its society. He concludes that the dominance of the Indonesian state was never brought into question. This was due to the various strategies such as the amalgamation of political parties into two opposition parties, the military's repressive territorial structure which was complemented with its ideology *dwifungsi* and not to mention the distribution of patronage opportunities.<sup>77</sup> In other words, Crouch looks at the overall relationship between the state and society but does not examine the state's capacity to act upon its policy goals. This differs from the focus of my own thesis which is more concerned with state effectiveness specifically in terms of managing secessionism. I specifically examine social segments with nationalistic claims for an independent state, namely East Timor and Aceh, and its

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<sup>77</sup> Harold Crouch, 'Indonesia's 'Strong' State', Dauvergne (ed.), *Weak and Strong States*, p. 100-107

interactions between other social segments and the segments within the state in relation to these nationalistic claims.

### **Contributing to the Existing Literature**

Existing comparative studies on the secessionist movements in Indonesia are rare. This is surprising considering the challenge of managing a multiplicity of the ethnic groups residing in a group of geographical scattered islands. However, the general literature up until the downfall of Soeharto has concentrated on politics at the centre. As a result, regional politics have been marginalized. The few existing studies, discussed below, are case oriented and debates on ethnic mobilization in Indonesia are more concentrated on causal explanations of the emergence of nationalism as opposed to the dynamics of center-regional relations.

The downfall of the New Order and the transformation of the political system brought new issues for scholars to grapple with. The messy transition consisted of a multiplicity of problems. Rapid democratization, ethnic conflicts and economic turmoil ignited a wave of speculation that Indonesia was on the verge of Balkanisation. It was due to this revival of ethnic mobilization that, scholars have turned their attention to ethnic politics. However though there has been an increased scholarly interest in ethnic relations in the post- Soeharto literature, studies have been incorporated into more general studies. The few existing studies have been case oriented and ethnic relations have been rarely studied comparatively. The aim of this study is to contribute to the study of secessionism in Indonesia from the comparative perspective and to theoretically explore the dynamic of centre-regional relations.

The Dutch upon granting independence to the Dutch East Indies recognized the danger of a Javanese (who constitute roughly half of the population) dominated state.<sup>78</sup> Subsequently, the Dutch made federalism a condition for independence. A great majority of Indonesians were dissatisfied with the foreign imposed institutional arrangement as it failed to correspond with ethnic entities.<sup>79</sup> Most importantly, many saw federalism as 'an instrument of Dutch control and an obstacle of the attainment of their independence'<sup>80</sup>. Barely seven months later, the federal arrangement came to an end.

The Dutch may have been right in insisting on federalism as preventive measures for ethnic divisions. Ironically, five decades on and the Indonesian state is returning to a similar political system they were so united against. The Dutch may have been also right in their fears that ethnicity could be problematic in post-independent politics yet the existing literature on Indonesian society and politics has concentrated on the wider picture which has come at the expense of regional politics. As the central government began to tighten its rule over the archipelago, written works were predominantly occupied with the emergence of the New Order<sup>81</sup> and the pillars that upheld the regime. There was strong emphasis on factors that brought opposition against the regime under control such as the army<sup>82</sup> and the state ideology Pancasila<sup>83</sup>. As

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<sup>78</sup> Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, p. 452

<sup>79</sup> Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 72

<sup>80</sup> Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, p. 450

<sup>81</sup> Michael Vatikiotis, *Indonesian politics under Suharto: the rise and fall of the New Order*, (London: Routledge, 1998); Also see Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting Indonesia's Search for Stability*

<sup>82</sup> For the events leading up to the Soeharto's takeover of power and the army's gradual emergence see Harold Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); for subsequent studies in the latter half of the New Order period see Robert Lowry, *The Armed Forces of Indonesia*, (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1996)

<sup>83</sup> Douglas E. Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: democracy, Islam, and the ideology of tolerance*,



Soeharto inherited an ailing economy with soaring inflation rates of 600 per cent, academics became intrigued and were drawn to the study of Indonesia's miraculous growth.<sup>84</sup> Though the rule of Soeharto and his generals remained uncontested, it was carelessly overlooked that the central authority could command such control without pockets of resistance forming in the periphery. It was the lack of studies of regional politics that made Indonesia unprepared and unaware of the explosion of ethnic riots at the downfall of the New Order. As Jacques Bertrand quite rightly notes:

What were missed were the rising signs of "nibbling" at the regime's fundamental structure, much in the same way that society nibbled at the former communist systems of Eastern Europe and Soviet Union until they collapsed. Such nibbling at the edges is rarely studied, partly because it can not only reveal deep fissures in a regime or in society but it can also lead to many false assessments. Studying non-events or small-scale acts can be a risky venture.<sup>85</sup>

Though regional politics were much over shadowed by the elements of the New Order, there are a few existing studies that offer explanations of tensions between ethnic groups in Indonesia. The first prominent study on society and groups was Clifford Geertz's study, *The Religion of Java*. Geertz first brought the santri and abangan divide within the Muslim population to the forefront of Indonesian society and cultural studies. He studied three divisions amongst the Muslim population in Java: Priyayi, abangan and santri.<sup>86</sup> However, many Indonesian academics have pointed out that Geertz has misunderstood Javanese society. The Priyayi are

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(London: Routledge, 1995)

<sup>84</sup> Richard Robison, *Power and Economy in Suharto's Indonesia*, (Manila, Philippines: Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, 1990)

<sup>85</sup> Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. xii

<sup>86</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, (Glencoe: Free Press, 1964)

bureaucratic elite. As such, the Priyayi are not a religious group but a social one.<sup>87</sup>

Despite Geertz's misreading, he introduced the *abangan* and *santri* divide to the discussion of Indonesian society and politics. Though he confines his study to Java, the divide may be applied throughout the Muslim population which constitutes nearly 90 per cent of the entire population. *Abangan* and *santri* can be defined in very simple terms as liberal and strict Muslims respectively. Due to the uneven penetration of Islam in the archipelago, *santris* dominate the Outer Islands.<sup>88</sup> These are crude categorisations which though accepted by a few are also rejected by many as divisions have become somewhat blurred over the decades. Leo Suryadinata has acknowledged that it is a crude divide, however, he has maintained that the *abangan* and *santri* has useful implications for explaining Indonesian political behaviour and voting in the 1999 elections as well as the acceptance of the state ideology, *Pancasila*.<sup>89</sup>

The few existing studies on Aceh are case specific and have focussed on centre-regional relations in the past<sup>90</sup> or are ethnographic studies<sup>91</sup>. Other authors specialising on other regions within Indonesia also acknowledge the lack of studies on centre-regional relations. In his book, *West Papua & Indonesia since Suharto: Independence, autonomy or chaos?* Peter King acknowledges the same problem with West Papua. He notes that only 'four substantial political stud[ies]' have been written during the period since West Papua's Act of Free Choice up to the downfall of

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<sup>87</sup> Suryadinata, *Elections and Politics*, p. 7

<sup>88</sup> Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy*, p. 31-32

<sup>89</sup> Suryadinata, *Elections and Politics*, chapter 1

<sup>90</sup> See Eric Eugene Morris, *Islam and politics in Aceh: a Study of Center-Periphery Relations in Indonesia*; Tim Kell, *The Roots of the Acehese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, (Ithaca, New York: Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1995)

<sup>91</sup> See James T. Siegel, *The Rope of God*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000)

Soeharto.<sup>92</sup> There have been a few empirical analyses on the emergence of the movement in East Timor.<sup>93</sup> Though a lot of studies have been produced following East Timor's independence. The depoliticised political system and media controls which barricaded regional politics from being known to the outside world explains why there is a shortage of studies on specific regions. These studies have touched on various aspects of the respective conflicts. None of which have explored the state effectiveness in managing ethnic relations.

Indonesian society was depoliticised during the 32-year-rule of Soeharto which was supported by the military's strong role in the economy, society and politics. The military's rise to prominence was a long process which dated back to the military's involvement in the revolution against the Dutch.<sup>94</sup> The army's growing cohesion was accompanied by the weakening of the civilian regime unable to deal with crisis after crisis. The unified army was ready to step in when called for and exploited the situation to the full. The workings of numerous favourable events brought the army dangerously close to politics and later made it an integral part of the existing political order, bureaucracy and economy.

The army's political role was formalised in General Nasution's (Chief-of-Staff of the Army 1955-1962) speech at the National Military Academy in November 1958 when he announced the Indonesian army would take the 'middle way'.<sup>95</sup> This new role meant that the army would not take on a passive role as in the West nor would it take

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<sup>92</sup> Peter King, *West Papua & Indonesia since Suharto: Independence, Autonomy or Chaos?*, (Sydney, NSW: University of NSW Press, 2004), Introduction

<sup>93</sup> For example, Jill Jolliffe, *East Timor Nationalism and Colonialism*, (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1978)

<sup>94</sup> Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, p. 22

<sup>95</sup> Daniel S. Lev, 'The Political Role of the Army in Indonesia' in *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Winter, 1963-1964), p. 359

the politically active roles of South America. General Nasution's speech was an attempt to direct the army's participation in the political process on terms other than a coup.<sup>96</sup> It was because of its gradual involvement in virtually all aspects of the state that encouraged its doctrine, 'Dwifungsi' or 'Dual Function' which has been entrenched in the law.<sup>97</sup> As such, the army perceived itself as legitimate and responsible not merely in the limited conventional sense of upholding and defending the territorial state but became intertwined in the polity and economy.

The army has lost much of its credibility due to its association with the New Order and its involvement with pro-Indonesia militias in East Timor before the region gained its independence.<sup>98</sup> As a result, there have been public demands for the army to reform. A few far-reaching changes include the abandonment of dwifungsi, the phrasing out of military representation in parliament, scheduled for 2004, and the separation of the police from the armed forces.<sup>99</sup>

Regional politics were brought to wider attention after the downfall of Soeharto and in the light of rapid democratisation, economic upheaval, inter-ethnic violence and an upsurge of civil society calling for *reformasi*. Intensive studies have been conducted on East Timor<sup>100</sup> while studies on other secessionist movements such as the Acehnese and the Papuan have been sparse. Though studies are gradually emerging, issues on Aceh have been incorporated in recent studies of social, political and economic

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p. 359

<sup>97</sup> Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto: the Rise and Fall of the New Order*, p. 61

<sup>98</sup> Angel Rabasa and Peter Chalk, *Indonesia's Transformation and the Stability of Southeast Asia*, (Santa Monica, C.A.: RAND, 2001), p. 59

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, p. 59

<sup>100</sup> For example, John Taylor, *East Timor: the price of freedom*, (London: Zed Books, 1999); and Irena Cristalis, *Bitter dawn: East Timor, a people's story*, (London: Zed Books, 2002)

conditions.<sup>101</sup> Jacques Bertrand's recent study, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, is perhaps the only existing study that has explored the present tensions of ethnic relations from a comparative perspective. His study examines ethnic violence in Indonesia in the late 1990s through historical institutionalism. He argues that ethnic responses to institutional evolution can provide useful insights to why ethnic conflicts emerge at specific times in specific spaces. It is these critical junctures of institutional transformation that shape the casual factors and processes that result in ethnic violence.<sup>102</sup>

Other studies have only explored the present crisis on the empirical level. Kingsbury and Aveling's edited volume provides insight into both inter-ethnic and centre-regional relations that have challenged Indonesia in the recent years.<sup>103</sup> The volume also reflects on the issues concerning the state's plans to implement autonomy as a means of managing ethnic relations and prospects of success.

It is the gap in the literature which has brought my interest to explore centre-regional relations in Indonesia. So far, I have established that theories of secessionism, ethnic relations, ethnic conflict management cannot fully offer an explanation to the research question of this thesis: what determines state effectiveness in managing secessionism. There have been an inadequate number of studies concerning ethnic mobilization as politics at the centre attracted the attention of the academia to the elements of the New Order. Literature on inter-ethnic conflict and secessionism in post-Soeharto Indonesia

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<sup>101</sup> For example, Hadi Soesastro, Anthony L. Smith and Han Mui Ling (eds.), *Governance in Indonesia: challenges facing the Megawati presidency*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003)

<sup>102</sup> Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, Chapters 1 and 2

<sup>103</sup> Damien Kingsbury and Harry Aveling (eds.), *Autonomy and Disintegration in Indonesia*, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003)

is gradually emerging. However, most case studies on secessionist movements examine the case of East Timor. Recent research on secessionist areas such as Aceh as well as Papua, on the other hand, has been incorporated in studies on the overall aftermath of the collapse of the New Order. Bertrand's study is perhaps the only existing comparative study that has explored secessionist movements as well as inter-ethnic conflict in regions.

This study and Bertrand's study share similarities in research interests: the dynamics of ethnic relations. However, we differ in focus and approach. Bertrand's study covers ethnic conflicts, both secessionist and inter-ethnic in nature and develops an explanation for the dynamics of ethnic violence: the causality and why ethnicity emerges in specific times and spaces. His approach to the research problem is based on historical institutionalism. On the other hand, my focus is specifically on Indonesia's two long standing secessionist movements that have emerged during the New Order and endured to the post-Soeharto state: East Timor and Aceh, and why they have resulted in different outcomes. I explore the difference in dynamics and outcomes of centre-regional relations, or more specifically, the state effectiveness in managing ethnic relations through the state-in-society approach. The method will be comparative to enhance its theoretical significance. Such a comparative study on the two secessionist movements of this study does not exist as of yet.

In this chapter, I have introduced the problematic and located it in the discipline of politics. I have also placed my own project within the existing literature. From the brief introduction to the state-in-society approach given earlier in this chapter, I will lay the theoretical grounds of the state-in-society approach in detail in the following

chapter. This will provide the analytical framework for the case studies of East Timor and Aceh in Chapters Four and Five.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Analytical Framework**

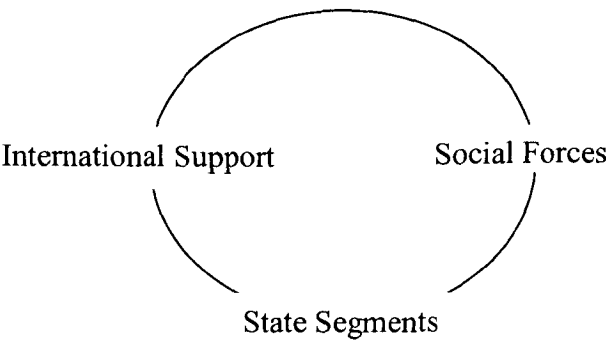
In the previous chapter, I have established that there are few studies of regional politics of Indonesia, though studies are gradually emerging since the downfall of Soeharto's New Order. Existing explanations of ethnic mobilisation in Indonesia are focused on sources of ethnic discontent rather than on the dynamics. Bertrand's recent work is the only comparative study on the dynamics of ethnic relations within Indonesia. He examines all ethnic conflicts including secession and inter-ethnic within Indonesia through an historical institutional lens. He argues that ethnic responses to institutional evolution can provide useful insights to why ethnic conflicts emerge at specific times in specific spaces. Hence, his focus is on causality of ethnic mobilisation which differs from my own study that examines the outcomes of the on-going interactions between external involvement, the state and the secessionist movements.

Bertrand's study is more confined to domestic politics which leaves out the international dimension in ethnic conflicts. This is appropriate to incorporate all types of ethnic violence that is both inter-ethnic, which does not aim to attract international support in order to create a new state, and secession in nature. Secessionism is a phenomenon where domestic and international politics are intertwined. The conflictual relationship between the state and the secessionist movement also involves the capability to act. However, this ability is not confined to the state. In situations where the state has conceded to ethnic demands indicates that the capability of a



secessionist group cannot be underestimated. However, existing theories of international relations, secessionism, ethnicity, and nationalism often fail to incorporate the three levels of analysis. It is the relationship between the secessionist movement, state and external involvement in the conflict where I explore the transformations between the three which influences the characteristics of state response to secessionism.

Figure 1: The Characteristics of State Response



The aim is to explore differences in state effectiveness in maintaining its territorial boundaries. This is examined through the theoretical ideas put forward by state-in-society theorists with an added international dimension to the framework. The assumption of this approach is that states are embedded within their societies. And it is the interactions between the two which affect one another’s ability to carry out actions. State effectiveness is constrained by social forces coalescing with other social forces. Parts of the state can also join forces with other parts of the state or with other social forces to oppose the state’s official action. With the ability to control social forces comes the effectiveness of mobilising the population. The greater the social control, the more the state can achieve in terms of their goals and how the rules of the

game should be. Hence, there is a mutuality of state-society interactions: 'Societies affect states as much as, or possibly more than, states affect societies'.<sup>1</sup> Because the state is managing a number of social demands from different social forces, the 'multi-front war' can reduce state strength or may even result in the state's demise.<sup>2</sup> In sum, the claims that the state-in-society are asserting are as follows<sup>3</sup>: Firstly, state effectiveness varies according to its ties with society. Secondly, states are not monolithic organisations; hence, they must be disaggregated to reveal the interactions among state segments. Thirdly, political action among social segments is not predictable. Fourthly, relations between the state and society do not necessarily result in a zero-sum game. States may align themselves with one segment of society, hence, interaction between state segments and some social segments can be mutually empowering.

In addition, the state is also a part of the world arena. Other states or international organisations may limit or enhance the state's effectiveness in what they can carry out domestically through the interactions and actions including support or sanctions. Based on the assumptions put forward by the state-in-society approach, I assess the state's effectiveness in carrying out its goals to maintain its territorial boundaries. State effectiveness is constrained by social forces and external constraints. In this thesis, I will explore the changes in the independent variables: the relative strength of the secessionist movement and external pressure which affects state effectiveness to

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<sup>1</sup> Joel S. Migdal, Atul Kohli, Vivienne Shue (eds.), *State Power and Social Forces: domination and transformation in the Third World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 2

<sup>2</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*, p. 50

<sup>3</sup> Migdal, Kohli and Shue (eds.), *State Power and Social Forces: domination and transformation in the Third World*, p. 2-4

achieve its goals. The core dependent variables are the success and failure of the state to maintain its territorial boundaries.

The aims of this study are as follows:

- 1) To theoretically explain why the two secessionist movements within the same political context have resulted in different outcomes.
- 2) To contribute to the empirical study of the respective secessionist movements.
- 3) To address the lack of comparative analysis in the field of ethnic conflict specifically in Indonesia.

In the following sections, I will define the key concepts of the theoretical framework the state, social forces and external involvement and the how the interplay between the three limits or enhances state effectiveness to carry out its actions.

## **The State**

To Migdal the various definitions of the state that draw on the Weberian model are problematic. Such definitions place emphasis on the state's institutional character and its monopoly over and legitimate use of force. The basis of these definitions are the crucial issues 'of domination or authority in the state's claimed territory and the degree to which the state's institutions can expect voluntary compliance with their rules (legitimacy) or the need to resort to coercion'<sup>4</sup>. What is problematic about these definitions notes Migdal is that the focus of the attention is on one aspect of the state:

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<sup>4</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*, p. 111

its bureaucratic dimension which tends to overestimate state capabilities and its effectiveness to carry out fixed and formal policy goals. Furthermore, a number of these definitions have insufficiently captured the formulation and transformation of state goals.<sup>5</sup>

However, the state does have its limitations to what it can carry out. Furthermore, what the state carries out is in constant change. One of the reasons, as Migdal points out, why the existing literature has drawn an invincible image of the state, its autonomy and the ability to act in a uniform manner is that the focus on the state has been the state elite. Yet ‘the state is far from the re-creation of the aims and wills of the state elite’<sup>6</sup>.

Migdal’s starting point is the paradoxical nature of the state. On one hand, the state can be viewed as a clearly integrated unit performing its tasks in a unified manner. This is termed by Migdal as the ‘idea of the state’ which ‘through its law and regulations, to impose of a single standard of behaviour in a given territory, one that is legislated, executed, and adjudicated by the various parts of the state organization’.<sup>7</sup> On the other, the state is fragmented with its segments loosely bound together. It is these ill-defined boundaries that often come into conflict with one another or the state’s ‘official’ action. Consequently, ‘the practices of state’ may end up contradicting ‘the idea of the state’.<sup>8</sup> As such, the deviant outcome of state policies may not be due to poorly designed policies, inefficient officials or the lack of

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 112

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 48

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 49

resources.<sup>9</sup> As Migdal notes: 'Theories that do not incorporate the two sides of the paradoxical nature of the state end up overidealizing its ability to turn rhetoric into effective policy or dismissing it as a grab-bag of everyman-out-for-himself, corrupt officials.'<sup>10</sup>

State-in-society theorists such as Migdal and Peter Dauvergne argue that the constant interaction within the state and social segments in turn influences state policies, actions, and capacity or may go as far as changing the nature of the state itself.<sup>11</sup> On one hand, political leaders face challenges in carrying out their goals. On the other, both formal and informal social organisations have been struggling with the state unwilling to cave in to state initiatives. Social segments and parts of the state have often coalesced to develop initiatives or practices that contradict official law of regulations of the state.<sup>12</sup>

State segments and social forces are in environment of conflict over who has the rights and ability to change or make the rules of society.<sup>13</sup> To oppose the state's official action, state segments and social forces may ally with one another or join forces amongst themselves. As such, the state and society are not necessarily on opposing ends or are a zero-sum game but can be mutually empowering. However, state segments in alliances with other social forces may enhance the capability to act but it may also transform goals to accommodate the new coalition partners. Social control is key to understanding how these goals change. Migdal utilises the concept of

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 12

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 23

<sup>11</sup> See Dauvergne (ed.), *Weak and Strong States*, p. 2; Migdal, Kohli, Shue (eds.), *State Power and Social Forces: domination and transformation in the Third World*, p. 16

<sup>12</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*, p. 49

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 49

social control similar to that of power which refers to ‘situations in which A gets B to do something he would not otherwise do’<sup>14</sup>. Both states and social forces, including informal and formal organisations such as neighbourhood groups to foreign owned companies, apply sanctions and rewards to induce others to follow different rules of the game.

With the ability to control social forces comes the effectiveness of mobilising the population. The greater the social control, the more the state can achieve in terms of their goals and how the rules of the game should be.<sup>15</sup> In struggles where either the state or society has enabled to establish their power broadly, *integrated domination* occurs. In outcomes where neither the state nor society has been able to establish nationwide domination resulting in conflicts in multiple arenas, the result is *dispersed domination*.<sup>16</sup> Increasing social control is reflected in three indicators compliance, participation and legitimacy.

- 1) Compliance. The strength of the state is dependent on the extent the population will comply with the state’s demands.
- 2) Participation. The strength of the state is also enhanced by the ability to organise the population into specialised tasks.
- 3) Legitimacy. According to the state-in-society approach, legitimacy involves the acceptance of the state’s rules and its social control as ‘true and right’<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> See footnote in Migdal, *State in society: studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*, p. 48

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 52

<sup>16</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*, p. 100

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 52

Legitimacy is also considered the most crucial factor in determining the strength of the state.

In sum, the greater the social control, the greater the capacity the state has to carry out its actions. States operate in an environment of conflict where it is one organisation within the domestic arena as well as the in the system of states.<sup>18</sup> States do not necessarily act in a coherent fashion and its parts may ally with other social forces; consequently, contradicting the coherent image of the state.

This has other implications for other main schools of state theory. The state-in-society theorists reject Marxist and structural claims that state action is just a mere consequence of social patterns of power. On the other hand, they also disagree with overly statist claims which present the state as dominant over society. The relationship between state and society is not one that seeks to establish the state as dominant over society or vice versa but holds that the both possess the ability to influence each other. As such, 'to speak of overall autonomy of states, as much recent theory does, might not at all be the best initial point of inquiry of studying the state. Researchers must first ask about the autonomy of the various components of the state, for which the calculus of pressures differs so markedly'<sup>19</sup>. We should ask ourselves: 'What sorts of social forces predominate at different points in the state hierarchy and why?'<sup>20</sup>

In order to understand the modifications of state action, Migdal proposes one possible way of understanding the complex interactions between the state and society. He suggests that the state must be disaggregated into four levels. Each level will face

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 50

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 117

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 117

different kinds of pressure from different components within the state and from social forces. The four levels including the trenches, dispersed field offices, agency's central offices and commanding heights will each face pressure from the other three sets of pressure from within the state as well as domestic and international. Pressure from within the state includes that from the supervisors, from the underlings and from staff from other agencies of roughly similar levels. Here, 'the more diverse and heterogeneous the arrays of pressures that various components of the state encounter on their different levels, especially when strong pressures are applied by multifarious domestic and foreign social forces, the less likely the state is to end up with complementary behaviour by its many parts and the less likely it is to convey successfully a coherent system of "legitimizing universes"' <sup>21</sup>. However in his edited volume, Dauvergne proposes that the state should be disaggregated to reveal 'the internal tensions and competition among state sections significantly shape state policies, actions, and capacity' <sup>22</sup> as opposed to examining the state in a hierarchical manner.

Dauvergne's method of studying the state is more suited to the politics of policy making in the Indonesian state. Soeharto was known for dividing and ruling his elites during the New Order. Specifically in the area of economic policy making under Soeharto, Adam Schwarz divides those involved in economic policy making into three components: the technocrats, the nationalists, and the cronies. <sup>23</sup> The technocrats were pro-market. The nationalists believed that the government should retain strong

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<sup>21</sup> Migdal, Kohli, Shue (eds.), *State Power and Social Forces: domination and transformation in the Third World*, p. 18

<sup>22</sup> Dauvergne (ed.), *Weak and Strong States*, p. 2

<sup>23</sup> Schwartz, *A Nation in Waiting Indonesia's Search for Stability*, p. 52-53; Similar arguments have also been made by William Liddle, though framing it in a different way. See R. William Liddle, 'The Relative Autonomy of the Third World Politician: Soeharto and Indonesian Economic Development in Comparative Perspective', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 4, December 1991, p. 407-411



control over the economy while assuring a helping hand for the indigenous population or the *pribumi* businessmen to catch up with their rich Chinese counterparts. The tensions between the three determined how economic policies took shape. Though the removal of Soeharto brought an end to divide and rule amongst the elites, I will later argue in Chapter Three that parliament has become an arena of genuine contestations amongst state sections. The cronies were less motivated by any particular ideology or policy options and were more driven by personal interests. Furthermore, hierarchy is prominent in Javanese culture. Top-down decision-making within the Indonesian bureaucracy reflects how power is concentrated in the hands of top officials.<sup>24</sup> As such, tensions are more likely to occur between state segments as opposed to between state levels.

Though tensions exist among state sections, I hold that the Indonesian state is relatively more uniform in its goal in keeping the territorial boundaries intact but there is a disagreement about the methods used to achieve these goals. In terms of dealing with secessionism, states are unlikely to give up a part of their land. And it is not uncommon for a state to use force to keep its territorial boundaries intact. Indonesia is no exception. Mainstream Indonesian political culture upholds the concept of the unitary state. The concept of unity is also one of the five points of the Indonesian state's ideology, Pancasila.<sup>25</sup> Pancasila has been an integral part of people's lives. Civil servants attend courses on Pancasila.<sup>26</sup> Up until the changes of election laws in 1999, the Pancasila ideology was imposed on mass organisations and political

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<sup>24</sup> Colin MacAndrews (ed.), *Central Government and Local Development in Indonesia*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 9

<sup>25</sup> The principles of Pancasila are stated in the 1945 Constitution: belief in one supreme God; humanitarianism; nationalism expressed in the unity of Indonesia; consultative democracy; and social justice.

<sup>26</sup> Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, p. xvi

parties.<sup>27</sup> The elites that support national unity and central control are most forcefully represented by Soeharto's political organisation, Golkar (from *golongan karya* or functional groups), which enjoyed dominance for three decades during the New Order.<sup>28</sup> Another important component of the New Order was the military which had always played a substantial role in dealing with ethnic unrest.

The military's role in politics can be traced back to the revolution against the Dutch where the army fought side by side with the nationalist movement. Consequently, it never saw itself as an instrument of the state but a force that took part in the creation of the state.<sup>29</sup> It was the regional rebellion in the 1950s and the consequent imposition of martial law in 1957 that became the army's first initial step to its involvement in politics. In the late 1950s, General Nasution had a clear intention to seek a more permanent role for the military and a position in the state where it would sit comfortably between its counterparts in the West and Latin America or known as 'the army's middle way'.<sup>30</sup> This later formed the basis of the military's ideology *dwifungsi* (dual function) which legitimised the army's role as both the protector of the territorial state from external threats and its institutionalised involvement in politics. *Dwifungsi* was later enshrined in the law.<sup>31</sup> While *dwifungsi* supported the army's role as protector of national unity, this was reinforced by the territorial system. Here, the army had positions in the civil administration, polity and the economy from the national level down to the village.

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<sup>27</sup> Suryadinata, *Elections and Politics*, p. 61

<sup>28</sup> David Bouchier, 'Habibie's Interregnum' in Chris Manning and Peter van Diermen, *Indonesia in transition: social aspects of reformasi and crisis*, (London: Zed Books, 2000), p. 26

<sup>29</sup> Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, p. 64

<sup>30</sup> Lev, 'The Army's Political Role', p. 359; Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, p. 65

<sup>31</sup> Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, p. 60

The New Order upheld the military's position as dominant over internal security and challenges to the boundaries of the state was dealt with via force. However, post-Soeharto Indonesia meant that the change in leadership also entailed a change in policymaking. Post-Soeharto governments have incorporated a variety of approaches from the offer of special autonomy to the use of force. The changes in policy have reflected those in power as well as tensions among state segments. These policies or actions may clash and accommodate the interests of the various social forces within the boundaries of the state. As such, to what extent the state can achieve its goals vary according to sector, time and the social forces that oppose or support state action. The politics between the various state segments involved in managing ethnic relations specifically to the Indonesian context will be explored in detail in Chapter Three.

## **Social Forces**

Like states, society is not monolithic but consists of a multiplicity of social forces. The main focus of this study is the secessionist movements in Aceh and East Timor. However, I will also explore the interactions between the secessionist movements and other social segments. I will examine whether these other social segments support or oppose state action towards the secessionist movements which in turn will affect the state's capacity through mutual empowerment to carry out its actions towards dealing with secessionism.

Social forces consist of both informal organisations such as patron-client networks and formal organisations such as businesses and churches.<sup>32</sup> These social forces

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<sup>32</sup> Migdal, Kohli and Shue (eds.), *State power and social forces*, p. 20

operate within the context of other social forces which all vie to mobilise segments of the population. In this contest of 'domination and accommodation', social forces interact with one another not only through struggles with social forces but also to form coalitions.<sup>33</sup> However, coalitions and accommodations with other social forces may enhance a social force's capability to act or achieve its goals but it may also transform the social force's original goals in order to incorporate new ideas to accommodate its new coalition partners. Like the state, social forces compete for social control in order to enhance a social force's domination. Also they can use the same currency, compliance, legitimacy and participation, as the state to expand their social control and determine how the rules of the game should be.<sup>34</sup>

The secessionist movement only makes up a part of society within the realm of the state. Assuming that decision-makers aim to gain as much popular support as they can get to enhance the chances for re-election, the capacity of the state to implement policies concerning secessionism is also shaped by the support or opposition or even indifference (which may be interpreted as support) from other social forces. As such, interactions between social forces and the state do not necessarily result in a zero-sum game, but the state and various segments of society could be mutually empowering.<sup>35</sup> In other words, the interactions between the two could result in competition for relative autonomy to act according to their goals.<sup>36</sup> It is the interaction between the state and various segments of society which influences the outcome of state action.

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<sup>33</sup> Migdal, *State in society: studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*, p. 20-21

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 53

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 4

<sup>36</sup> Migdal, Kohli and Shue (eds.), *State power and social forces*, p. 24

Challenges toward the state may also attract international attention that could potentially transform into international support for the state or social forces which may enhance the capability to act. However, international involvement does not necessarily mean support for an independent state but may only go as far as urging the sides to come to a peace agreement, such as autonomy deal, consequently, limiting the state's policy options. External involvement is less certain and often short-lived. It is perhaps logical to say that no foreign state will be willing to take the risk if a movement is weak and likely to be appeased by the state.<sup>37</sup> As such, the strength of a movement attracts attention and increases the potential of the third state's involvement.

The strength of a secessionist movement is inextricably intertwined with power. Though power is difficult to measure and is relational, what is crucial to the study of power is how the state is affected by the action of the secessionist movement.<sup>38</sup> As such, though I propose the following factors that may indicate the strength of the movement, these factors only matter when they affect the state or limit the state's options to act in relation with the secessionist movement.

Secessionist movements are rarely uniform groups, perhaps less so than states. States are uniform in their goals, which are to maintain its territorial boundaries, but state sections may differ on how to achieve this goal. A uniform goal amongst the supporters of independence also serves to strengthen a secessionist movement. In comparison, a weak movement is one with a small support base which in turn affects its ability to reshape or transform state action. Power struggles, and conflicting

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<sup>37</sup> Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, p. 273

<sup>38</sup> Stephen Lukes, *Power*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 8-9

interests amongst those who want independence can also weaken the movement. Most regions that harbour secessionist movements are ethnically diverse. However, ethnic heterogeneity does not inhibit the formation of a secessionist movement, unless the group opposed to secessionism is armed, but may serve to lessen the support for independence.<sup>39</sup>

The population of the secessionist region can be divided. Some may want independence. Among the supporters of independence, the means of achieving independence may vary. Some may hold that independence can only be achieved through force while others may seek more peaceful means to achieve independence such as via a referendum. Other segments of a secessionist region may not necessarily seek a separate state but lay out demands that fall short of territorial separation such as autonomy. These forces combined are crucial to the strength of opposition to the centre. A movement with little support only makes the state's position strong when managing secessionism. Also, the intensity and widespread nature of protests against the state within a rebellious region can also be used as a marker to the support for independence.<sup>40</sup> Here, identifying the secessionist movements' strongholds will help illustrate the extent of social support and challenge the secessionist movement poses towards the state.

A strong secessionist movement is one that has not only has strong popular support amongst the population it claims to represent but also through mutual empowerment it can claim support from other social forces in areas outside the secessionist region. The case for independence strengthens further when international support is offered

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<sup>39</sup> Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, p. 267

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 269

(from other states or international organisations).<sup>41</sup> The greater the support for independence, the greater the challenge posed against the state.

### **External Involvement**

The concept of globalisation has been a fashionable way to investigate the interactions between the state and non-state actors and how these interactions affect one another at both the national and international levels. The 'advances in technology and modern communications are said to have unleashed new contacts and intercourse among peoples, special movements, transnational corporations, and governments. The result is a set of processes which have affected national and international politics in an extraordinary way'.<sup>42</sup> The concept of globalisation draws attention to the complexity of interactions between the state and non-state actors at both the national and international level in the political and economic domains. However, the complex consequences of globalisation go beyond the scope of this study. What is more central to the secessionist movement and the state is the direct intervention of a third state or an international body that will either support the secessionist cause for independence or support the state to keep territorial boundaries intact.

Contrary to its original implications, the conception of self-determination does not guarantee the right of a nation of cultural or ethnic basis to form a separate state. Rather, self-determination became a right confined to the former colonised people under Western rule. The idea was to allow such a right to be 'exercise(d) once and for

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<sup>41</sup> Kingsbury and Aveling (eds.), *Autonomy and Disintegration in Indonesia*, p. 2

<sup>42</sup> Ngaire Woods, *The Political Economy of Globalization*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 1

all and never again'<sup>43</sup>. Since the late 1960s the right had become internationally legal and despite its ambiguity, the United Nations Charter, Article 1 (2) and (55), has been supported by other UN resolutions that clearly work against ethno-nationalistic movements. Efforts have also painstakingly continued to make the colonial constructed boundaries sacrosanct once most colonies were declared independent. If such a right was given to all ethnic nations, and taking into consideration the number of ethno-nationalistic movements, the right would undoubtedly destabilise the international system. States supported by the international system which recognises states as sovereign, independent and free from outside interference. In other words, the third world state jurisdiction is a 'formal-legal condition' or what Robert H. Jackson's terms as 'negative sovereignty'.<sup>44</sup>

This has been supported by the international tradition of non-intervention. The principle appears in the UN Charter Article 2 that discourages third states from interfering in another state's internal affairs. However, there have been exceptions made under circumstances where the situation has been seen as a threat to international peace and security as in the cases of the former Yugoslavia and Somalia.<sup>45</sup> Rather, the UN has adopted various preventive measures<sup>46</sup> such as the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which encourages states to respect minority rights which goes as far as supporting autonomy though still respecting the boundaries of the existing state. To sum up the international community's stance on the issue of secessionism, Boutros Boutros-Ghali notes:

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<sup>43</sup> Alexis Heraclides, *The Self-Determination of Minorities in International Politics*, p. 21

<sup>44</sup> Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World State*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 26

<sup>45</sup> Kamal S. Shehadi, *Ethnic Self-Determination*, Adelphi Paper 283, December 1993, p. 52-56

<sup>46</sup> Also see Jennifer Jackson Preece 'Self-Determination and Minority Rights' in Ho-Won Jeong (ed.), *The New Agenda for Peace Research*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 1999), p. 204-206



The foundation-stone of this work (peace-keeping) is and must remain the state. Respect for its fundamental sovereignty and integrity are crucial to any common international progress... Yet if every ethnic, religious or linguistic group claimed statehood, there would be no limit to fragmentation, and peace, security and economic well-being for all would become ever more difficult to achieve... One requirement for the solutions to these problems lies in the commitment to human rights with a special sensitivity to those minorities, whether ethnic religious, social or linguistic. The League of Nations provided a machinery for the international protection of minorities. That instrument, together with increasingly effective machinery of the United Nations dealing with human rights, should enhance the situation of minorities as well as the stability of states... The sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of states within the established international system, and the principle of self-determination for peoples, both of great value and importance, must not be permitted to work against each other in the period ahead. Respect for democratic principles at all levels of social existence is crucial: in communities, within States and the community of States. Our constant duty should be to maintain the integrity of each while finding a balanced design for all.<sup>47</sup>

Preventive measures encouraged by the UN and the principle of non-interference are thorny matters. In practice, the principle of non-intervention is a completely different matter. The majority of post-war secessionist movements have had crucial international connections. Eritrean rebels received training from third countries such

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<sup>47</sup> *An Agenda for Peace Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping*, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

as Syria; Bangladesh received support from India which was willing to go to war with Pakistan.<sup>48</sup>

External involvement may support the state or the secessionist movement which in turn will enhance the capacity of either side to act. There is a misconception that involvement is 'either for or against, with no in-between positions being acknowledged or tolerated by the two involved parties'<sup>49</sup>. However, I hold that taking no position in turn favours the already advantageous position of state which possesses the military capacity as opposed to the secessionist movements.

This leads us next question, who has the influence? According to Buzan, the status of a power is dependent on how it is judged by others and how actual significance of their capabilities is calculated.<sup>50</sup> For the former, the EU poses a good example where it is perceived as a great power regardless of its ambiguous political status. For the latter, Japan is an example where potential capabilities are calculated by others. Though Japan may not possess any nuclear capability, others may calculate its potential to develop one on the basis of its civil nuclear power and its space programmes.

External involvement can take form in tangible support and political-diplomatic support. Tangible support include material aid such as arms; access to communications media and other networks; and services and assistance within or outside the secessionist territory such as sanctuary and a base for operations. Political-

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<sup>48</sup> Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, p. 272

<sup>49</sup> Alexis Heraclides, 'Secessionist Movements and External Involvement', *International Organizations*, Vol. 44, No. 3, p. 345

<sup>50</sup> Barry Buzan, *The United States and the Great Powers World Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), p. 68

diplomatic support includes verbal statements of concern from other governments as well as campaigns of the secessionist movements and their cause.<sup>51</sup> The findings of this study will show that Aceh and East Timor both received tangible support though each differed. Support for Aceh was more clandestine and covert whereas East Timor's support was more legitimate and open. GAM fighters received military training and aid from Libya during the 1980s but assistance was short-lived. On the other hand, East Timor received tangible support in form of a peacekeeping force post-referendum with the backing of the UN and many other states. Likewise both Aceh and East Timor have political-diplomatic support though to varying degrees. Aceh received support from HDC to take on the role of mediating talks between Jakarta and GAM. However in this case, HDC did not have the political clout to influence or limit Jakarta's policy options. Here, Jakarta was in control of when talks would start and when it would end. On the other hand, political-diplomatic support for East Timor started after the publicised 1991 Dili incident, though momentum increased at the demise of the New Order.

The strength of a movement attracts attention and increases the potential of the third state's involvement. Third state involvement complicates matters and prolongs the conflict. It is the support of the international community on the whole that is a crucial factor for the maintenance or the redefinition of the existing boundaries. However, support from a third country may not necessarily translate into support for independence. The international community may support the secessionist movement's goal; hereby, creating a new member of the international community. It could support the existing state boundaries. As international norms reject the use of force,

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<sup>51</sup> Heraclides, 'Secessionist Movements and External Involvement', p. 368

involvement could result in pressure for peace talks or a power-sharing arrangement such as federalism or autonomy. At the very least, external support will increase opposition to the central government.

State output is a result of tensions among state sections. However, social and external forces further shape state output and rarely do the outcomes reflect the original goals of either of the actors. The state and social forces can be mutually empowering or the interactions between the two could result in competition for autonomy to act according to their goals.<sup>52</sup> To what extent social forces and external pressure shapes state output in turn reflects the strength and weakness of the state.

The strength of the state is equated with the capability of the state to carry out its preferred policies, rules and norms. The more social control, the more manoeuvrability the state has to carry out its actions. However, the state may receive support from external factors for its actions in dealing with secessionism or there may not be any international interference at all which in turn would not limit the state's policy options. Likewise, the strong state is one that has either strong social support from social segments (other than the secessionist movement) or other social segments are indifferent to the state's action in the secessionist region which could be interpreted as support for the state; consequently, giving the state more manoeuvrability to carry out policies to manage the secessionist movements.

It is the complex three-way relationship that determines the characteristics of state response towards a secessionist movement. Hence, the greater the autonomy, the more

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<sup>52</sup> Migdal, Kohli and Shue (eds.), *State power and social forces*, p. 24

power the state has to act on secessionism according to will. An examination of social forces in the two secessionist regions and their interaction with third countries as well as the state will be explored in Chapters Four and Five. Each case study will be divided into instances creating comparisons across both region and time. The instances are divided according to each of the presidencies. Both secessionist movements emerged when Soeharto was in power, though ended at different junctures. Events and policy changes in each instance will be used to test the hypothesis based on the state-in-society approach: the more social control and the more support the state receives at the international level in keeping its boundaries in tact, the more manoeuvrability the state will have to achieve its policy goals in maintaining the boundaries of the state.

To test the hypothesis, I will trace the dynamics behind state action or policy to identify the factors that led the state to act towards the secessionist movements as well as the factors behind the transformation of state action. If the findings show that state action was a result of the interactions between the state itself, social forces and external pressure, this will confirm the central hypothesis based on the state-in-society approach. In the case studies, I will indicate which constellation explains what outcome if the instance confirms the theory. If other factors as well as the interactions between the state, social forces and external pressure played a role in transforming state action toward the secessionist movements, this will only partially confirm the theory.

## The Advantages of Comparative Method

The study examines the different outcomes of two secessionist movements, East Timor and Aceh by comparative method. The type of comparative method is 'the most similar' systems. The logic underlying most similar research is 'to isolate the effect of an independent variable by controlling for the effects of spurious and intervening variables'<sup>53</sup>. The most similar design entails establishing a cause that is found in the instances studied. The number of cases under investigation makes this study a few case comparison and is similar to a few country study or a small-*N*. The cases under study are secessionist movements and differ from other cases of ethnic discontent in various regions in the archipelago such as Ambon and Poso which come under the label of horizontal or inter-ethnic conflict. Though few-country studies have advantages, which I will discuss further in this section, their 'biggest' weakness is in case selection.<sup>54</sup> The problem occurs when case selection is dependent on the outcome. However though the research question had developed from the interest in tracing the differences in outcome of secessionist movements within the same context, case selection was not entirely based on the dependent variable and choice was not entirely based on the most 'purposeful'<sup>55</sup> to enhance the value of my own theoretical argument. Though Indonesia has faced the challenge of secessionism since the birth of the nation, the two case studies of this research have endured from the New Order to the present. This eliminates other cases of secession attempts such as the South Moluccas which emerged during the early years of independence and died down soon

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<sup>53</sup> Peter Burnham, Karin Gilland, Wyn Grant and Zig Layton-Henry, *Research Methods in Politics*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), p. 63-64

<sup>54</sup> Todd Landman, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics An Introduction*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 201

<sup>55</sup> B. Guy Peters, *Comparative Politics: Theory and Methods*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p.37

after or the short-lived secessionist movement in Riau which emerged after the downfall of the New Order.

I have also omitted Papua from my study. Though Papua is a long-standing movement like Aceh and East Timor, support for the movement has been inconsistent and disorganised.<sup>56</sup> The Free Papua Movement (or OPM) and support for independence as more political than militant.<sup>57</sup> As such, the nature of the movement differs from Fretilin and GAM which pose a more security threat in relative terms to the Indonesian military. This in turn may effect the results of the comparison between the three.

Regional studies have been marginalized and more often incorporated into more generalised analysis on the wider political context of Indonesia. The few existing case studies are predominantly on East Timor. Relatively little has been written on Aceh. It is this gap in the existing literature that has brought my attention to these secessionist movements in Indonesia. While mainstream politics have occupied the minds of academics and journalists, ethnic politics have only caught the attention of the academics and the media when ethnic violence in various parts of the archipelago exploded in the wake of Soeharto's downfall.

While specific case studies are enriched with detail and can produce significant findings, cases studied comparatively broaden the number of analytical tools.<sup>58</sup> In

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<sup>56</sup> Aspinall, 'Modernity, history and ethnicity Indonesian and Acehnese nationalism in conflict', Kingsbury and Harry Aveling (eds.), *Autonomy and Disintegration in Indonesia*, p. 144

<sup>57</sup> Based on various discussions with NGO workers.

<sup>58</sup> Dietrich Rueschemeyer, 'Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?' in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds.) *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

other words, examining a single case may not help to explain the trajectory of the other two regions, even though both regions are located in the same national political context.

However, the debates between the advantages and disadvantages of conducting area studies and comparative analysis are not necessarily polarised. The divide shows that 'social scientists do not seek to master the literature on the region but rather to master the literature of the discipline'<sup>59</sup>. Conversely, the area study specialist focuses their attention on context specific knowledge rather law-like regularities. The comparisons between many countries make substantive generalisations about key issues in the discipline of politics. They offer a considerable number of inferences that supports general theories. However, contextual detail is lost in many-country comparisons. The unease about this trade-off has led a number of scholars to turn to the few-country comparisons.<sup>60</sup> Comparing a few countries, allows the researcher to examine the historical processes and political contexts of the cases under study, which cannot be achieved in many-country comparison. Consequently, the strength of few country studies lies in their level of generalisation (though they do not intend to generalise beyond the cases under investigation) and their inclusion of contextuality.<sup>61</sup> In other words, few country comparisons merge the two sides of the debate. This study falls into the few-countries category or the small-*N* where area study is not necessarily compromised and theory is enhanced.

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<sup>59</sup> Robert H. Bates, 'Area and the Discipline: A Useful Controversy', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2, June 1997, p. 166

<sup>60</sup> Landman, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics*, p. 199

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, p. 200



An old problem of comparative politics is seeking appropriate cases to compare or “matched comparisons”. Conducting a comparative study based on the most similar design by employing two cases within the same political context (same state) has its advantages over cross-country comparison. The purpose of the most similar design is ‘to manipulate[s] the changes in the independent variables through case selection and to control the extraneous variance by the same means’<sup>62</sup>. However, though case selection might bring together a group of countries that share similarities, there is always a possibility that there could be some differences between the countries that may affect the validity of the research. Results become misleading as the study that was under the impression of comparing ‘apples with apples’ or conducting the most similar case research, has in practice, conducted a study that was a most different.<sup>63</sup> As such, increasing and comparing the number of cases within the same political context has its advantages. Firstly, making comparisons within the same political context evades the problem of finding cases that share similarities in terms of political context that I wish to make a constant.<sup>64</sup>

Secondly, cross-country analysis confronts the problem of the validity of theoretical concepts and their indicators when conducting a cross-country comparison.<sup>65</sup> Specific concepts have relative meanings according to country contexts. The relationship between concepts is expected to differ accordingly.<sup>66</sup> As such, establishing equivalence of indicators in cross-country analysis can be problematic where different

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<sup>62</sup> Peters, *Comparative Politics*, p. 38

<sup>63</sup> Richard Locke and Kathleen Thelen, ‘Problems of Equivalence in Comparative Politics: Apples and Oranges, Again’, *APSA-CP*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Winter 1998, p. 11

<sup>64</sup> Burnham, Gilland, Grant and Layton-Henry, *Research Methods in Politics*, p. 56

<sup>65</sup> Landman, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics*, p. 41

<sup>66</sup> Adam Przeworski and Henry Tenue, ‘Equivalence in Cross-National Research’, in Donald P. Warwick and Samuel Osherson (eds.), *Comparative Research Methods*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 120

social and cultural settings may skew the functioning of these concepts and threaten the validity of the research. The most similar case design conducted within the same political context avoids this problem.

Thirdly, the comparison of the two secessionist movements enhances the theoretical significance of the study and to a certain degree standardizes indicators. Consequently, the advantage of a comparative study will be that it will give a broader interpretation to other cases whether it be within or external to the Indonesian context.

Fourthly, the comparisons are not confined to the contemporary situation but also trace the historical relationship between society and the state. I will divide the analysis of each case according to the policies under the various administrations starting from under Soeharto's rule to the post-Soeharto governments. I start my study with the Soeharto period as the two secessionist movements emerged during this period. The two periods are demarcated with common events. Regime change provided the division between the two periods. However while I make these divisions, I still acknowledge that the state-in-society approach is process-oriented rather than static. I also acknowledge Migdal's discomfort for rigid and static outcomes and fixed goals which can become too restrictive.<sup>67</sup> The state-in-society approach is a continuing process of the interactions between the state and society and the state is constantly "becoming"<sup>68</sup>. As the relationship within the state and between the state segments and its society are generally the same in each period, I will still analyze the transformation between the state and society under each of the different administrations from Soeharto's to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's (SBY). This will reveal the different

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<sup>67</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*, p. 23

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p. 24-25

constellations of power; consequently, enhancing theoretical debate.<sup>69</sup> As the number of cases makes the study a small-*N*, by increasing the number of instances avoids the problem having a mismatch between the number of variables and the number of observations.<sup>70</sup>

Because the nature of what political scientists study cannot be gathered for experimentation, controlled and replicated as in the natural sciences, there are two methods to assess the viability of the hypothesis. Firstly, counterfactuals or “thought experiment” have been implicitly used in a number of studies to evaluate the casual hypothesis by supposing it absent in the situation. Secondly, actual cases that bear resemblance to the cases under study can be used for additional cases to support the analysts’ positive claims to the hypothesis.<sup>71</sup> However, unlike single cases, the comparative study supplies the counterfactual situation.<sup>72</sup> To further assess the hypothesis, I have also used the second method of actual case studies.

This study has covered similar ground to Edward Aspinall and Mark T. Berger’s article.<sup>73</sup> They investigate how and when East Timor, Aceh and West Papua were absorbed into Indonesia. The ‘how’ and ‘when’ strongly influenced the appeals made by each of the secessionist movements for a separate state and how these grounds for a separate state appealed to the international community to support their cause. However, the article runs into the problem of having ‘too many variables and too few

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<sup>69</sup> Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyn Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 32

<sup>70</sup> Peters, *Comparative Politics*, p. 65

<sup>71</sup> David Fearon, ‘Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing’, *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 2, (1991), p. 169

<sup>72</sup> Landman, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics*, p. 12

<sup>73</sup> Aspinall and Berger, ‘The break-up of Indonesia? Nationalisms after Decolonization and the limits of the nation-state in post-cold war Southeast Asia’,

countries'. The number of variables should be less than the number of countries or in this instance, regions.<sup>74</sup> As such, the authors have failed to come up with a cohesive argument.

### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

This thesis has examined whether social forces and opposition from state segments has influenced the Indonesian state effectiveness in managing secessionism in East Timor and Aceh. The research methods used to obtain information for this study are interviews, documents, media accounts, and an analysis of the existing literature.

The information on state policy goals in managing the three regions has been obtained by interviews with the Indonesian officials involved. The interviews were semi-structured and complied with the University of Bristol guidelines. For ethical reasons, not all sources have been named. Permission for the sources that have been named was given prior to the interview.

Information from interviews was complemented with press statements, media reports, official websites and official statements in the media. Only credible media sources such as Tempo News Magazine, the Far Eastern Economic Review and the Jakarta Post were utilized.

Information on the secessionist movements was collected from personal accounts and published interviews in the media from those involved in the respective secessionist

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<sup>74</sup> Gary King et al., *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 119-122

movements. The official websites of the secessionist movements also provided a vital source of information. NGO reports and interviews from all parties whether for or against independence or even taking a neutral stance was explored. Due to the sensitivity of the conflict in Aceh, entering various parts of the region is problematic. I conducted online or telephone interviews as far as possible.

Due to the nature and sensitivity of the topic, I acknowledge that each source of information had its own agenda. While the Indonesian government and aligned sources will downplay various issues of the conflicts such as the number of supporters, sources from the secessionist movements may have exaggerated certain aspects such as the intensity and the violence inflicted by the state on the people. Consequently, methodological triangulation was utilized to enhance the reliability of the data collected. Methodological triangulation involves the data collection through a number of different methods such as interviews, publications and press statements.

This thesis utilized the state-in-society approach to offer a theoretical explanation to why two secessionist regions in Indonesia have resulted in different outcomes. The data collected was examined in the light of the assumed relationship of the independent variable: the coalitions between and among social forces and state segments which in turn influenced state effectiveness in managing secessionism and the dependent variables: the success or failure of the state in maintaining its boundaries. If the data collected showed that social forces and state segments did influence state effectiveness in managing secessionism, the central hypothesis was confirmed. If the findings showed the contrary, I explored the factors that did have an impact on the dependent variable.

## Spelling

As far as possible, I have tried to use a standard form of transliteration in my study. In 1972 there were certain changes made to standardised the spelling in the Indonesian and Malay languages such as *u* substituted *oe*, *j* replaced *dj* and *j* becomes *y*. Unless the old spelling is preferred by an individual (for example 'Soeharto' instead of 'Suharto'), this study followed the 1972 standardised spelling.

In this chapter, I have laid the theoretical grounds of the state-in-society approach. In the next chapter, I will explore the relationship between the Indonesian state and social forces. The relationship between the state and social forces within the Indonesian state will be explored according to two periods: Soeharto and post-Soeharto governments. Chapters Four and Five will specifically focus on the interactions between state segments and social forces in East Timor and Aceh respectively.

## Chapter 3

### The Indonesian State

The economic shock in Indonesia was a jolted by a wider regional crisis that began in July 1997 in Thailand. The much-weakened economy and the sharp devaluation of the rupiah from Rp 2,350 to the dollar in June 1997 to Rp 16,500 in January 1998 had seemingly brought the New Order to an end. The depreciation of the rupiah had made it impossible for Indonesian companies to import foreign goods or to pay off foreign debt. Businesses became bankrupt, unemployment rates jumped and prices rose. There are a number of diverse views of what caused the economic crisis. On one hand, the government was quick to point that the cause of the crisis was purely economic and inevitable in an economic cycle. On the other, many thought the problems came from within the regime.<sup>1</sup>

Whether the roots of the problem were due to a weak economy or a brittle regime, Indonesians definitely thought it was high time for change. Riots not only intensified but also multiplied in frequency. It had been reported that 30 incidents of social unrest occurred in the first seven weeks of 1998 alone.<sup>2</sup> Jakarta, Medan and main cities across Java all became hot spots where riots occurred on a daily basis while in other areas unrest was less intense. The Chinese dominating Indonesia's business seemed to be the most vulnerable and common target of all.<sup>3</sup> The situation mirrored the intense period of May 1967 when the Chinese in Malaysia had become targets which resulted

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<sup>1</sup> Hal Hill, *Indonesian Economy in Crisis*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1999), p. 69

<sup>2</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Nervous Neighbours', 26 February 1998, p. 16

<sup>3</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Shattered Confidence', 28 May 1998, p. 20

in a complete restructuring of the ethnic balance in the economy.<sup>4</sup> University students in both Java and the Outer Islands demanded political and economic reforms, the abandonment of the military's *dwifungsi* as well as to daringly call for Soeharto's resignation. In an attempt to cling on to power, Soeharto pegged the rupiah at Rp 5,000 to the US dollar- a somewhat unrealistic move considering the levels of foreign reserves were at a mere US\$14-17 billion in comparison to the colossal debt of US\$137.4 billion.<sup>5</sup> The move indicated how Soeharto failed to grasp the seriousness of the situation.

In defiance, Soeharto went ahead and announced his new 'crony' cabinet, which included his eldest daughter, Siti Hardiyanti (Tutut) Rukmana, as well as long time business and golfing partner, Bob Hasan. Other appointments not only ignored popular dissatisfaction for KKN, an Indonesian acronym for corruption, collusion and nepotism (*Korupsi, Kolusi, dan Nepotisme*), it also further alienated the New Order elites. Soeharto's response to elite disunity bore no resemblance to his capability to manage his elites during his 32-year rule. Secure about his place in power or unaware of the situation, Soeharto went ahead and removed fuel and electricity subsidies. As a consequence, there was a 70 per cent rise in premium petrol prices, 60 per cent increase in electricity prices over the following five months and food prices soared. The inflation rate reached 60 per cent. In January, there were 14 million unemployed Indonesians or 15 per cent of the entire workforce.<sup>6</sup> Soeharto's actions seemed to do no good but harm. Demands for him to step down had become louder. However, the President insisted that: 'It's not that I don't want to step down but doing so now

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<sup>4</sup> For more details on the issue see, James Jesudason, 'Chinese business and ethnic equilibrium in Malaysia', *Development and Change*, No. 28, p. 119-141

<sup>5</sup> Leo Suryadinata, 'A Year of Upheaval and Uncertainty the fall of Soeharto and the rise of Habibie', *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1999, p. 113

<sup>6</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'A Sense of Disgust', 14 May 1998, p. 26



would only threaten stability'<sup>7</sup>. On the 19 May, Soeharto promised to hold elections. After three decades of rigged elections, the president's offer was highly questionable.

On 18 May 1998 House Speaker, Harmoko, called for Soeharto to tender his resignation and further threatened to impeach him if he refused. A once loyal military did nothing to intervene or stop the demonstrations. Soeharto's decayed power base finally collapsed when General Wiranto told the president the military could no longer guarantee security in Jakarta. Acknowledging that support was no longer there, Soeharto finally decided to comply. After a three-minute speech on 21 May, the New Order came to an end. Ironically, it was these similar conditions- political uncertainties, an economic crisis and mortified Chinese- which had eased Soeharto and his generals to power.

It would not be a gross exaggeration to say that very few commentators on Indonesian politics had anticipated the end of Soeharto's rule and the New Order would come so soon.<sup>8</sup> The state-in-society approach maintains that coalitions and accommodations between state segments and social forces may enhance the coalition's capability to act. In the process of coalition building, original goals may be transformed to accommodate new coalition partners. Coalitions of social forces and state segments can only grow out of social control. Social control is getting coalition partners to accept the new rules of the game through rewards and sanctions. The greater the social control, the more manoeuvrability and strength the state possesses to carry out its actions. Indicators that show that the state possesses high levels of social control are compliance (to the extent the population conforms with the state's rules),

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<sup>7</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Endgame', 28 May 1998, p.13

<sup>8</sup> Michael van Langenburg, 'How might the Suharto era conclude?' *Inside Indonesia*, No 48 October-December 1996, [www.insideindonesia.org](http://www.insideindonesia.org), accessed 13 January 2006

participation (organising the population into specialised tasks), and legitimacy (the acceptance of the state's rules of the game). However, the mere fact that Soeharto ruled Indonesia for 32 years with no substantial opposition or challenges to the state or its overall policies, rules and norms does indicate a substantial degree of social control throughout this period.

The literature and analysis of the New Order also seems to support this. William Liddle has gone as far as concluding in his 1984 article that the New Order, unlike many Third World regimes, had become institutionalised and would likely to outlive President Soeharto.<sup>9</sup> Though the present situation has proven Liddle wrong, in retrospect, Liddle gave his analysis after the New Order had overcome extreme tests such as inheriting an ailing economy with inflation rates as high as 600% from former President Sukarno. Despite continued economic development throughout the decades, the regime only became increasingly authoritarian in nature. Such a combination is beyond the explanation of classical western political thought which cite a positive link between capitalist development and democracy. This begs the question, how great was social control? What structures were in place to ensure compliance and participation from the population? What ensured state legitimacy? How did the collapse of the New Order transfigure state and social relations?

The first section of this chapter is dedicated towards, to use Migdal's term, disaggregating both the state and society and the interactions between the two during the New Order. State-society relations during this period can be classified as the state achieving integrated domination. This is followed by an analysis of state and society

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<sup>9</sup> William Liddle, 'Suharto's Indonesia: Personal Rule and Political Institutions', *Pacific Affairs*, no. 58 Spring 1985), p. 70

relations in the period thereafter. The collapse of the New Order transformed state-society relations to what would also be classified as integrated domination which differs from the New Order in that this period society dominated the state. As the Indonesian state gradually consolidated and gained control over the situation, state-society relations would be categorised as dispersed domination where neither the state nor society had achieved complete domination over the other.

## The New Order

There is little consensus to how the New Order should be labelled. Categories range from patrimonialism<sup>10</sup> as to bureaucratic pluralism<sup>11</sup>, from corporatism<sup>12</sup> to repressive developmentalism<sup>13</sup>. Though differences remain in this regard, the point of agreement would be that the state remained dominant over social forces or had a considerable amount of social control. The power of the state during this period significantly differed from the early post-independence years when social forces were considerably stronger.<sup>14</sup> In comparison, the state versus society during the New Order has often been described as a pyramid.<sup>15</sup> Soeharto sat at the apex supported by his cronies including the military and the political elite, both of which rested on society.

As such, political power was highly concentrated at the top, as Rizal Sukma neatly

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<sup>10</sup> Harold Crouch, Patrimonialism and Military Rule in Indonesia, *World Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Jul., 1979); Jamie Mackie, 'Indonesia: Economic Growth and Depoliticization', in James Morley (ed.), *Driven by growth: political change in the Asia-Pacific region*, (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1993); Rizal Sukma, 'Democratic Governance and Security in Indonesia', *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 4 (2), p. 243; Gerry van Klinken, 'Out of Africa - Colonial roots of Indonesia's ethnic conflicts', *Inside Indonesia*, No. 95, 25 January 2002

<sup>11</sup> Donald K. Emmerson, 'Understanding the New Order: Bureaucratic Pluralism in Indonesia', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 23, No. 11

<sup>12</sup> See Dwight King, 'Indonesia's New Order as a Bureaucratic Polity, a Neo-patrimonialist Regime or Bureaucratic Authoritarian Regime: What difference does it make?', Benedict Anderson and Audrey Kahin (eds.), *Interpreting Indonesian Politics: Thirteen Contributions to the Debate*, (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesian Project, 1982), p. 104-16

<sup>13</sup> Herbert Feith, 'Repressive-Developmentalist Regimes in Asia', *Alternatives*, No 7, 1982, p. 491-506

<sup>14</sup> Mackie, 'Indonesia: Economic Growth and Depoliticization', p. 70

<sup>15</sup> Liddle, 'Suharto's Indonesia: Personal Rule and Political Institutions', p. 68-90

sums it up, the regime functioned on the premise of 'rule of man' as opposed to 'rule of law'.<sup>16</sup> How the state remained dominant over social forces had much to do with the various structures in place which contained social forces or state segments from challenging the state. The elites and business sector were co-opted through a network of patronage. While high growth rates had provided rewards for supporters of the regime, small pockets of resistance that emerged from time to time were suppressed swiftly. The main task of managing social unrest and secessionism in troubled regions were conferred on the military. The mixture of sanctions and rewards ensured *compliance*. Corporatist institutions indicated levels of *participation*. Popular support for a strong government which kept its place in power for three decades indicated had *legitimacy*.

Soeharto himself carefully managed inter-elite relations. The power concentrated at the apex of the New Order pyramid enabled Soeharto to control his elites effectively, thus, preventing any disruption of state policies from within the state. There are three types of elites that were crucial to the running of his government: the military, the bureaucrats and the conglomerates.<sup>17</sup> The military was crucial to maintaining internal security including secessionist movements, intelligence, labour unrest and Islamic revivalism. The bureaucratic elites contributed to the day-to-day running of the state, implementation of government projects and the bureaucracy itself became a source for middle class employment. And finally the business conglomerates, predominantly under Chinese ownership, that provided the state with capital for its development projects and funding for its institutions, kept the economy running and became crucial

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<sup>16</sup> Sukma, 'Democratic Governance and Security in Indonesia', p. 241

<sup>17</sup> William Case, *Politics in Southeast Asia Democracy or Less*, (Surrey: Curzon Press, 2002), p. 37

business partners to the Soeharto family. Closely connected to the regime, the conglomerates took prominence over other social forces.

Soeharto's relations with his elites were defined by divide and rule. Soeharto preferred to cultivate relations with individuals rather than groups. He was renowned for playing off one against the other so both would be preoccupied with distrust; thus, denying them cohesion or the chance to muster enough strength to challenge him. Examples of competing factions can be drawn from Wiranto and Major General Prabowo Subianto within the army; and the economically nationalist technologies led by B.J. Habibie and the liberalising technocrats apparent within the finance ministry, central bank and the Ministry of National Development Planning (*Bappenas*).<sup>18</sup> This was facilitated by the intelligence service that informed him what his elites were up to. Furthermore, he rewarded his cronies with benefits that ensured him loyalty towards his position and the New Order.

### *The Emergence of the New Order- Legitimacy and Consent*

The process of easing Soeharto's predecessor, Sukarno, from the reigns of power starting from 1965 is key to understanding how Soeharto gained public consent for a change of leadership and the restructuring of the political landscape. How the New Order emerged was no simple matter, or as in most regimes with strong military backing, the result of an overnight coup. Such a disruption would only incite the nation against General Soeharto, then a relatively unknown and apparently apolitical

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 40

general.<sup>19</sup> Sukarno enjoyed mass support as the nation's founding father and undoubtedly became the representative of Indonesian nationalism and the revolution. However in the latter years of Sukarno's guided democracy, Indonesia had the ingredients that were right for regime change. Sukarno's political position rested on the army while balancing its power off with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), the world's third largest communist party at the time and the army's archrival. Social and political conflict dominated the scene and Sukarno's nationalistic view on the economy only made matters worse. The economy deteriorated and inflation was at an exceptionally high rate of 600%, there were no foreign reserves and national debt was US\$2 billion.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, not only did standards of living fall but the lack of funds also hindered the government's ability to function effectively let alone carry out development plans for the population.<sup>21</sup> As a result, tensions were on the rise.

General Soeharto emerged in 1965 as a relatively unknown figure that carried out a campaign to 'rid' Indonesia of members of the PKI which resulted in an estimated half a million deaths.<sup>22</sup> Some accounts even suggest two and a half million.<sup>23</sup> Though the military became one of the main pillars of the regime, the army was not alone in this campaign against the PKI, the rest of the left and Sukarno. The military drew on support from a coalition of anti-communists and anti-Sukarno groups including Islamic groups, the middle class, student activists and intellectuals. The formation of this alliance was known as the 'New Order coalition'. This support not only gave rise to mass mobilisation against the Old Order but it also provided the military with

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<sup>19</sup> Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, p. 2

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 33

<sup>21</sup> Mackie, 'Indonesia: Economic Growth and Depoliticization', p. 74

<sup>22</sup> Case, *Politics in Southeast Asia*, p. 34. For a more detailed analysis see, Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey, *A preliminary analysis of the October 1, 1965, coup in Indonesia*, 1971

<sup>23</sup> Stanley, 'Opening that Dark Age', *Inside Indonesia*, No. 63, July-September 2000, [www.insideindonesia.org](http://www.insideindonesia.org), accessed 12 January 2004

subsequent legitimacy to take over the reigns of power. In 1966, he began easing Indonesia's nationalist hero out of power through the executive order of 11 March, *Supersemar*. A year later Soeharto became acting president and in 1968 retained full presidency.

It was this transferral of leadership, which took almost three years that enabled Soeharto and his generals to create a façade of constitutionality and consent from the public.<sup>24</sup> Soeharto and the army embarked on an anti-PKI campaign accusing the communists of being anti-national and anti-Sukarno. Their biggest crime of all was being atheist which immediately violated Pancasila's first principle<sup>25</sup>, making them anti-Pancasila. The New Order Coalition demanded that the PKI be banned from politics. When Sukarno had rejected popular demands and called for the situation to be resolved peacefully, he immediately became associated with the whole affair. And as the army insisted that the coup had everything to do with the PKI, Sukarno refusal was perceived as an act of treachery.<sup>26</sup>

Soeharto kept the country in a state of emergency and took steps to prolong the crisis, uncertainty and confusion. It was these conditions which came to discredit Sukarno and his rule which resulted in the signing of *Supersemar* on 11 March, handing over certain powers to Soeharto to restore calm and order to the nation. Thereafter, the violence gradually subsided and the mass murders of PKI members and sympathisers quickly declined after March 1966. Amidst the chaos and uncertainty of the time,

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<sup>24</sup> I Gusti Agung Ayu Ratih, 'Soeharto's New Order State: Imposed Illusions and Invented Legitimations', Paper presented as the final paper for the Master of Arts in Southeast Asian Studies-History, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Spring 1997, p. 9-31

<sup>25</sup> Belief in the one and only God (Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa)

<sup>26</sup> I Gusti Agung Ayu Ratih, 'Soeharto's New Order State: Imposed Illusions and Invented Legitimations', p. 18

Soeharto justified his gradual take over of power to be a necessity to defend the nation, Pancasila and the Constitution. Consequently, the removal of Sukarno became a legitimate non-coup. The bloody incidents of 1965-1966 both terrorised and convinced Indonesians to avoid political activity as well as to fear what the New Order elites were capable of. In turn, this fear helped the state maintain a relatively stable society and control challenges posed towards the state's policies, rules and norms. In other words, the incidents of 1965-66 helped create legitimacy for the New Order, a crucial factor for the state to maintain social control.

It was this chaotic scene of unstable politics and an ailing economy which the New Order Coalition was committed to depart; thus, making economic development and political stability the catchphrases of the New Order. Furthermore, the New Order's obsession with stability can also be explained through the Javanese notions of power which sees powers being concentrated in the hands of the king and not his subjects. The power and authority of a Javanese ruler is determined by his capability in maintaining and controlling the surrounding areas of his kingdom. Once there are signs that the Javanese ruler can no longer maintain control over his kingdom, his legitimacy will wane in the eyes of his people. Hence in modern times, Javanese notion of power and legitimacy provides the basis for a highly centralised government.<sup>27</sup> This has also provided the basis of the relationship between Java and the outer islands during colonial times. Javanese court ideologies also reinforce hierarchical order in society which legitimises democracy led-by the wisdom of the

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<sup>27</sup> For more on the Javanese concept of power see Benedict Anderson, 'The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture', in Claire Holt, *Culture and politics in Indonesia*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972); and Benedict Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*, (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1990)



elite (*kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh hikmat kebijaksanaan dalam permusyawaratan/perwakilan*).<sup>28</sup>

For Soeharto and the main architects of the New Order, stability and development were two sides of the same coin. While seeking to achieve these two crucial aims, the New Order elites envisioned state-societal relations that drew heavily from organicism or the integral state. The New Order Coalition also committed themselves to Pancasila, the five principles authored by Sukarno to unite the diverse young nation and the 1945 Constitution which endorses a strong executive.

### ***Organicism: the basis of state and society relations***

Initially, organicism or integralism was popularised by Professor Raden Supomo, a judge during the Japanese occupation, and Ki Hadjar Dewantara from the 1920s to the 1940s. The concept of integralism sees the state and members of society as an integrated whole which in turn reflects patterns of authority found in a traditional family or an orderly village society.<sup>29</sup> The state is united with its people and should transcend all groups within society of which relations are to be based on mutual assistance (*gotong rojong*) and that of a family.<sup>30</sup>

The concept of organicism was drawn from two sources. The first source derived from the principles of harmony and consensus which the New Order elite saw as a

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<sup>28</sup> See *The Preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia*, [www.indonesia-gateway.web.id/content](http://www.indonesia-gateway.web.id/content), accessed 14 January 2006; Also see Liddle, 'Soeharto's Indonesia: Personal Rule and Political Institutions', p. 81

<sup>29</sup> David Bouchier and Vedi R. Hadiz (eds.), *Indonesian Politics and Society A Reader*, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 8; Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 8

<sup>30</sup> Supomo, 'An Integralistic State', in Herbert Feith and Lance Castles (eds.), *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945-1965*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 190-191

characteristic from 'Eastern' culture - a culture which also embodies the Indonesian 'spirit'.<sup>31</sup> This spirit 'is characterised by the ideal of the unity of life... [T]he state is nothing but the entire society or entire people of Indonesia, as an ordered, structure unity'.<sup>32</sup> This is in contrast to western societies which are based on individualism and liberalism. Such qualities according to Supomo, '[gave] rise to imperialism and exploitation, producing chaos and disruption in the world, physically and spiritually' which Indonesians should 'shun' in the process of nation building.<sup>33</sup> The other source was drawn from Javanese political culture of which aristocrat officials or *priyayi* such as Supomo were representative.<sup>34</sup> The emphasis was on order, authority and hierarchy which became strong features of the New Order.

As state and society were viewed as an integrated whole, there was no room for conflict between state and society. Integralism had denied the public of any political participation. Furthermore, it had also had been influential in reorganising state and society of the New Order which gradually portended a state which dominated society. As Soeharto stated in a historic state address in August 1967 on the eve of independence day that '... the New Order is nothing less than ordering of the entire life of the people...'.<sup>35</sup>

This begs the question, how did society view the concept of the organic state? The most crucial factor in determining the strength of the state is legitimacy. It involves

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<sup>31</sup> See Colonel Abdulkadir Besar, 'Abdulkadir Besar: the family state', in Bourchier and Hadiz (eds.), *Indonesian Politics and Society*, p. 41-42

<sup>32</sup> Supomo, 'An Integralistic State', p. 190-191

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 188

<sup>34</sup> Richard Robison, 'Tensions in state and regime', in Kevin Hewison, Richard Robison and Garry Rodan (eds.), *Southeast Asia in the 1990s: authoritarianism, democracy and capitalism*, (St. Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1993), p. 42

<sup>35</sup> Soeharto, 'Soeharto: Pancasila Democracy' in Bourchier and Hadiz (eds.), *Indonesian Politics and Society A Reader*, p. 37

the acceptance of the state's rules and norms as true and right. It is the popular acknowledgement and acceptance of the social order.<sup>36</sup> As mentioned earlier, the chaos and breakdown of order during the period 1965-66 had a profound effect on many that no one wished for a repeat incident that resembled anything like the tragic events of 1965-66.<sup>37</sup> Mass politics was also widely perceived to be a source of instability and according to the 'New Order radicals' and political mobilisation that occurred during the Old Order was perceived as a major obstacle to modernisation.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, a strong government was needed to remedy the situation of chaos and instability. And as a result, many members, even a few disgruntled ones, involved in the New Order Coalition continued to lend its support to the new government. Furthermore, the painful history of 1965-66 had a powerful impact on those who lived through it. The perceived need for a strong government in turn created legitimacy or what the state-in-society approach would define as the society's 'acceptance of the state's rules and its social control as 'true and right'. However, the gradual maturation of the middle class over the years transformed those fears of chaos which initially helped maintain the stability of the New Order. During the latter years of the New Order, students protests and social unrest within Jakarta and emerged in other areas showed that the middle classes no longer shared the New Order's ideals of how to maintain stability and order.

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<sup>36</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*, 52

<sup>37</sup> Michael van Langenberg, 'The New Order State: Language, Ideology, Hegemony', in Arief Budiman (eds.), *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, (Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990), p. 126; Mackie, 'Indonesia: Economic Growth and Depoliticization', p. 75; Edward Aspinall, 'Indonesia: broadening oppositional base', in Garry Roden (ed.), *Political Opposition in Industrialising Asia*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 215

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 222

Though in my final analysis I argue that the state during this period remained dominant over society, I deem it crucial to raise two incidents that posed challenges to the state that may indicate that social control had weakened. Though organicism defined the basis of state and social relations, denying that there was a complete absence of political opposition during the period in which the New Order was in power would be misleading. However, it is safe to make claims that there was no significant opposition to the regime.

Though the New Order commanded much authority, the state did not possess this authority immediately when it resumed power. There were a few challenges to the regime that only later resulted in the closing down of political space for social forces. Opposition in the early period of the New Order derived from the rupture within the New Order Coalition itself. However, because these groups shared common interests with the regime- economic development and stability, which Sukarno was unable to provide- opposition did not seek to overthrow the regime but sought to correct it. As such, criticisms channelled towards the government were ‘reserved and respectful’<sup>39</sup>. They became critical of corruption and the aim was to save the government from going down the ‘wrong’ path. Some even placed the blame on corrupt generals that surrounded Soeharto, rather than Soeharto himself.<sup>40</sup> In other words, opposition came from where the state was embedded in society or what Aspinall otherwise terms as the ‘grey area zone’<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Edward Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 23

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 24

<sup>41</sup> Aspinall, ‘Indonesia: broadening oppositional base’, in Roden (ed.), *Political Opposition in Industrialising Asia*, p. 215

The first signs of opposition came when discontent amongst the supporters-turned-critics soon turned into action that culminated in the *Malari riots* in January 1974. Later in the run up to the 1977 elections and the 1978 MPR's session, members of the New Order coalition protested against the government and called for Soeharto to be held responsible for the 'deviations from the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila'<sup>42</sup>. Again, the government dealt with the situation via force and further restrictions were also imposed, consequently, closing down on political space and entering a decade which steadily enhanced state dominance. Jamie Mackie identifies the Malari riots as the 'watershed' moment to the strengthening of the New Order regime.<sup>43</sup> The gradual dominance of the state thereafter, which took place during the 1980s, has also led Liddle to describe the New Order in 1987 'at the height of its power'<sup>44</sup>. The incident signified an end to relatively open politics and the beginning of a more repressive environment. Though there were subsequent challenges to the regime stemming from the military known as the 'Petition of Fifty' and the Islamic quarter, like early opposition these incidents were swiftly dealt with by reinforcing the dominance of the state.

The second incident came towards the end of the 1980s and early 1990s when there was a shift in the government's tone towards political liberalisation, thus, entering an era known as *keterbukaan* (openness). Openness during this period entailed the loosening of media censorship, the release of dissidents, and the toleration of protests, demonstrations and criticisms against the government, open discussion surrounding the question of succession as well as parliament calling for greater government

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<sup>42</sup> Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia*, p. 24

<sup>43</sup> Mackie, 'Indonesia: Economic Growth and Depoliticization', p. 79

<sup>44</sup> R. William Liddle, 'Indonesia in 1987: The New Order at the Height of Its Power', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 2

accountability.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, Indonesia witnessed the creation of *Komnas HAM* or the Indonesian Human Rights Commission. However, these moves are not to be interpreted as the weakening of the state or transformations of state-societal relations in any form. Overall, the state during this period remained dominant over society.

Openness was stimulated by then US Ambassador Paul Wolfowitz's farewell speech in which he called for greater openness to accompany the rapid economic growth at the time. It has been argued that this was also complemented by social forces and the growing tensions within the regime which called for openness and reform policies.<sup>46</sup> However, I agree with Bertrand that social forces were weak due to a mixture of co-optation and the regime's coercive measures towards opposition. Furthermore, '[t]he president is fond of floating trial balloons to test the grounds for support'<sup>47</sup>. Though students protests intensified 'surpris[ing] many observers in Jakarta'<sup>48</sup> and there were increased levels of public discussion indicating a growing maturity amongst the population, the slow pace of political openness reflected the government's hesitant attitude towards liberalisation.<sup>49</sup> The extent to which liberalisation was allowed was controlled by the government indicated that the government still had a firm grip on the situation.<sup>50</sup> After the closure of the three prominent news magazines, the return to coercion accelerated. As such, liberalisation did not lead to a transition as in most cases but instead further strengthened authoritarian structures in place. Such a process is termed by Jacques Bertrand as 'false starts'.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Succession Talks', 27 April 1989, p. 28

<sup>46</sup> Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia*, p. 34

<sup>47</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Succession Talks', 27 April 1989, p. 28

<sup>48</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Stirring on Campus', 6 April 1989, p. 34

<sup>49</sup> Gordon R. Hein, 'Indonesia in 1989 A Question of Openness', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 30, No. 2, p. 222

<sup>50</sup> Donald K. Emmerson, 'Indonesia in 1990 A Foreshadow Play', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 2, p. 179

<sup>51</sup> Jacques Bertrand, 'False Starts, Succession Crises, and Regime Transition: Flirting with Openness in Indonesia', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 69, no. 3, Fall 1996

## *Compliance*

That there were only two failed protests at the lack of freedoms indicates the Indonesian state had a considerable amount of social control throughout its 32-year-rule. While there is still much to be said concerning force and the main agent of force: the military, which I shall return to later in the chapter, coercion and force were not the only factors which kept the New Order in power for over three decades. Only those who stepped out of the boundaries deemed acceptable to the New Order elite were dealt with by force. And though the military was one of the main pillars of the regime, the New Order cannot be narrowly defined as military based. There was also less forceful ways of gaining support from the population through rewards. In the following section, I will further examine how the New Order co-opted or rewarded social forces. While integralism or organism defined state and society relations, economic development that brought about high growth rates assured continued support for the regime as well as an important source of funding for the creation of patrimonial ties. In comparison with the Sukarno's Old Order where there was much talk of sustaining the revolutionary spirit, Soeharto addressed the needs of the people. Many sectors of society were incorporated into state sponsored organisations. Elections and political parties also indicated participation on part of the population. In the following section, I will explore the New Order's repressive measures used to keep social forces under control and ensured their compliance with the state's demands. It was these two elements that kept social challenges at bay: rewards and sanctions which in turn ensured compliance.

## *Rewards*

The New Order regime emerged when the economy was on the brink of collapse. However, under favourable conditions, the economy gradually improved bringing a considerable amount of prosperity to Indonesians. The sharp increase in world oil prices in the 1970s became an almost overnight solution to the ailing economy. Indonesian crude oil in 1972 fetched less than \$US 3 a barrel but increased to over \$US 30 a barrel by 1980. It was during this period that revenues from oil had increased by 45.5% that provided the funding for development projects and the installation of services and infrastructure.<sup>52</sup> This was complemented by an inflow of foreign aid. As western nations became concerned with the threat of communism engulfing Southeast Asia, a group of 13 western countries together with Japan and a few multilateral lending agencies established the 'Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia' or IGGI in 1967.<sup>53</sup> The group agreed not only to reschedule Indonesia's massive debt but also pledged new loans to restore the country's battered economy and has held annual meetings thereafter. As a result, Indonesia's GDP expanded by 7.7% rising standards of living of many; consequently, tackling one of the main problems that brought the New Order coalition together in the first place.

This new source of wealth considerably alleviated poverty in Indonesia and provided the crucial funding for development projects across the archipelago. By the mid-1970s, there was a significant improvement in communications and the outer islands no longer seemed as isolated and as difficult to reach as before.<sup>54</sup> Development programmes were implemented in areas such as agriculture, education, health which

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<sup>52</sup> Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, p. 34

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, p. 46

<sup>54</sup> MacAndrews (ed.), *Central Government and Local Development in Indonesia*, p. 30



reached out to every level of society. As the New Order came into being in 1967, poverty afflicted on 67% of the population gradually eased and dropped dramatically to 15% in 1990.<sup>55</sup> Income per capita was just above \$US 260 in 1970 but rose to almost double to over \$US 500 in 1980.<sup>56</sup> However, development did more than raise the standard of living of most Indonesians. Development programmes were implemented by government agencies enhanced the strength of the role of the government over society.<sup>57</sup> As mentioned earlier, much of the population did not wish to return to the situation under the Old Order. As such, high growth rates became a crucial source of support for the New Order which in turn legitimised its rule.

It was economic growth that also became critical to securing support from those, predominately the Chinese, civil servants and a few bureaucratic families, who profited from the distribution of benefits that came with it, creating a web of patrimonialism. It was these business groups that were given prominence over other social forces in Indonesia. Soeharto entrusted the Chinese with lucrative deals because of their ethnicity. The Chinese were vulnerable to resentment of other Indonesians and therefore were 'in a position to have their capital exploited in return for protection'.<sup>58</sup> The Chinese only constituted a fraction of Indonesia's immense population but 70% Indonesia's non-landed wealth belongs to the Chinese.<sup>59</sup>

Close links between state segments such as the military and capitalism developed into a relationship Richard Robison terms as 'bureaucratic capitalism'.<sup>60</sup> Bureaucratic

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<sup>55</sup> Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 58

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 35

<sup>57</sup> MacAndrews (ed.), *Central Government and Local Development in Indonesia*, p. 30

<sup>58</sup> Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, p. 50

<sup>59</sup> Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 28

<sup>60</sup> Robison, *Power and Economy in Suharto's Indonesia*, p. 14

agencies possessed the authority to allocate import licences and distributorships such as oil drilling, forestry concessions, and government contracts for construction. For example, the state run oil corporation, *Pertamina*, had very little to do with drilling and was primarily responsible for distributing drilling concessions to foreign companies. Similarly, *Bulog* dealt with basic food commodities and allocated distributorships of these goods to local businessmen.<sup>61</sup>

Not only did the bureaucratic officials and the military allocate benefits to their cronies, but the president himself and his family were also involved in some of the most lucrative businesses. In an attempt to nurture the automobile industry, Soeharto launched a national car project in February 1996 which was awarded to his son, Hutomo “Tommy” Mandala Putra. The incentive included a three-year tax exemption from import duties and luxury taxes to Indonesian car manufacturers using a local brand name and parts. As a result, Tommy could sell his ‘Timor’ brand of cars at duty free prices for 35.75 million rupiah which was half the price of other car models of similar type such as the Toyota Corolla which sold for 70 million rupiah.<sup>62</sup> President Soeharto and his family were also closely connected to other prominent businessmen such as Liem Sioe Liong, who was reportedly one of the richest men in the world. Liem provided roughly half of Indonesia’s cement used in various rural construction projects such as roads, schools and health centres known as INPRES (Presidential Instruction).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 15

<sup>62</sup> Christopher Hale, ‘Indonesia’s national car project revisited The history of Kia-Timor Motors and its aftermath’, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 4, p. 632

<sup>63</sup> Liddle, ‘Soeharto’s Indonesia: Personal Rule and Political Institutions’, p. 78

As the economy continued to grow at exceptional rates, expansion of the state ran along side with it. During the period of 1974-83, revenues expanded, the bureaucracy grew from 1.67 to 2.63 million civil servants, and state enterprises increased in number making the state the biggest employer.<sup>64</sup> The bureaucracy is ubiquitous in every part of society- from the capital down the village. As such, the authority of the bureaucracy cannot be underestimated. Because these groups were dependent on the state, little was done to disrupt or even correct it. 'Who cares if there is a little corruption here and there. Consider it a bonus for those who brought prosperity to the country', someone had once mentioned to me in an idle conversation during a trip to Jakarta. It is this attitude that has led to conservatism among those who benefited from economic growth and feared the risk of regime change and continued their support for the New Order.

Despite the corruption and cronyism that came with Soeharto's web of partimoniaism, the New Order has made major transformations that have not only made an impact on the majority in terms of standards of living but also on the country's economic status on the whole.<sup>65</sup> There was no doubt that Indonesia's industrialisation placed Indonesia among the ranks of Asia's rapid growing and changing economies. The World Bank hailed Indonesia as a member of the group of countries with phenomenal growth rates who experienced the 'Asian Miracle'.<sup>66</sup> High growth rates have in turn had a positive effect on the overall population as suggested

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<sup>64</sup> Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, p. 37

<sup>65</sup> My views are in line with Vatikiotis.

<sup>66</sup> World Bank, *The East Asian miracle: economic growth and public policy World Bank Public Policy report*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)

in the World Bank report. Poverty declined and on the whole, economic development raised the standards of living for Indonesians.<sup>67</sup>

### *Sanctions*

The Indonesian Military (or what known under the New Order as *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* or ABRI)<sup>68</sup> has maintained itself as the defender of the Pancasila state and guarantor of the five silas or principles which are not to be violated.<sup>69</sup> In practice, this means that the military does not respond to threats but responds to what it perceives as a security threat. Consequently, the military has not only become involved in external and internal security such as controlling separatism but it has also restricted the boundaries of governmental reform. Crucial to the military is the third sila or unity of Indonesia which embodies the slogan of ‘unity in diversity’ but with more emphasis on the unity as opposed to the diversity aspect of the slogan.

The military was one of the main pillars of strength that supported the New Order and Soeharto’s position in power. It made sure that religious and ethnic unrest, Islamic revivalism and labour discontent did not threaten stability of the regime. However, not all security threats were met with the same military response. Different levels of coercion and repression were applied according to different types of opposition. Perceived threats against the state ideology, such as the PKI and secession received

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 33

<sup>68</sup> TNI before April 1999 was formerly known as the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, or Abri) which also included the Police

<sup>69</sup> Damien Kingsbury, *Power politics and the Indonesian military*, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 6

the harshest response. Challenges from the lower classes received a harsher response in comparison to the middle classes.<sup>70</sup>

In the 1970s, dwifungsi justified the expansion of the military's control over key institutions of the state via transferring military personnel and placing them in civilian positions. The expansion of the military into civilian life reached the point where the military became by far Indonesia's largest political organisation. The military's organisational structure runs parallel with the civilian government at all levels. Positions such as cabinet ministers, member of parliaments, provincial governors, district heads, senior bureaucrats and ambassadors were reserved for both active and retired officers. By the late 1970s, half the cabinet, 56% of the district officers, 78% of the director-generals in the bureaucracy, 84% of ministerial secretaries and almost half of the country's diplomats were military officers.<sup>71</sup> The military's presence was also felt at the sub-national level. By 1983, 20 out of 27 governors were military officials and up to 40% were district heads.<sup>72</sup>

The territorial structure made the military's presence conspicuous from the national down to the village level as it enabled the military to maintain control and respond to unrest effectively and as quickly as possible. The territorial structure in which the archipelago was divided into areas, each under control of the army, ensured that regional governments remained loyal to Jakarta.<sup>73</sup> The system that began taking shape

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<sup>70</sup> Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia*, p. 5

<sup>71</sup> John F. Bradford, 'The Indonesian Military as a Professional Organization: Criteria and Ramifications for Reform', *Explorations in Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 5, no. 2, [www.hawaii.edu/pubs/explore](http://www.hawaii.edu/pubs/explore), accessed 16 November 2005, p. 70-71

<sup>72</sup> MacAndrews (ed.), *Central Government and Local Government in Indonesia*, p. 33

<sup>73</sup> Lowry, *The Armed Forces of Indonesia*, p. 91-94

in the early years of the new republic gradually developed to the point where it had utmost control over the population.

The military's role at all levels of society is justified by the military's doctrine *dwifungsi* or dual function but crucial to its strategy is the doctrine of Universal of People's Defence or *Sishankamrata*. This doctrine defines the relationship between the state and the army and most importantly with the people. In theory, the very basis of this strategy is the spontaneous help from the people when called for and in practice the army commands a great deal of influence over the population especially at the grassroots level even after the fall of Soeharto.<sup>74</sup> Illustrations of the strategy in use are the military's use of militias and informers used in both East Timor and Aceh.

The use of force was used in situations such as 1965-66 purge against the PKI members and the challenge of secession. Details of how the military brought about social control will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

### ***Participation***

According the state-in-society approach, states also gain social control by organising the population into specialised tasks within institutions of the state. The regime's main political machinery, Golkar was based on an army formed-organisation of anti-communist groups in 1964. Though the army had appropriated the concept of functional groups, the concept itself had been part of Sukarno's National Front strategy which complemented the multiparty system. Later Golkar incorporated many

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<sup>74</sup> Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, p. 62

other functional groups representing farmers, labour unions and businesses. The reason for incorporating these groups and labelling Golkar as a functional group as opposed to a political party was that political parties in the past were seen as a source of political chaos.<sup>75</sup> Most importantly, it was perceived that the multiparty system encouraged political attachment to particular ethnic, regional or religious based identities.<sup>76</sup>

In 1973, the existing political parties were forced to merge into two groups, consequently, forming the United Development Party (PPP) that was an amalgamation of Islamic based parties and the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) that joined forces with nationalists and Christian based parties. The amalgamations of political parties were in line with the principles of *musyawarah* and *mufakat*, or consultation and consensus which reflected the New Order's attempts to de-politicise society and its distaste for mass politics.<sup>77</sup> This also echoes the general literature on civil-military relations which cites the military's aversion for mass politics. In many cases, establishing an association with universal membership becomes appealing to the military because of its potential to mobilise the population to achieve the goal of national development.<sup>78</sup>

At the same time, elections were held to portray an image of 'democracy'. Contrary to this image, Pancasila had muted any form of competition between political parties. In 1982, legislation was outlined which proposed that all social organisations should

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<sup>75</sup> Leo Suryadinata, *Military Ascendancy and Political Culture A study of Indonesia's Golkar*, Monographs in International Studies Southeast Asia Series, No. 85, (Athens: Ohio University, 1989), p. 5

<sup>76</sup> Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: democracy, Islam, and the ideology of tolerance*, p. 29

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p. 29

<sup>78</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (London: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 245

accept Pancasila as the basis of their organisation, was formally enacted three years later, consequently, making Pancasila the sole ideology (*asas tunggal*) of the state.

Pancasila ideology is a set of five principles pronounced by President Sukarno on 1 June 1945 which is also in accordance with integralist thought. Pancasila was first announced to the public in an attempt to establish a common ground within the diverse nation which would coincide with the boundaries of the Dutch East Indies and fend off demands for an Islamic state.<sup>79</sup> The elites of the New Order had kept the ideals of those who contributed to the formation of Indonesian identity and nationalism as well as the 1945 Constitution but presented their own interpretation in such a way that served to enhance their rule over society. One crucial element of Pancasila is its reference to the historical experience of Indonesians. As such, Pancasila does not become a foreign ideology imposed on the people but a tradition that has always been conspicuous in Indonesian society. However, Pancasila is static. There is much talk of development without any mention of social change and instead an emphasis is placed on order and stability. As Michael Morfit notes Pancasila, as perceived by the New Order, is 'an ideology of containment rather than one of mobilization' with an emphasis on 'unity rather direction'.<sup>80</sup>

Consequently, PDI and PPP were indistinguishable from Golkar. This had more of an effect on PPP. Having Pancasila as its ideological foundation had posed a serious handicap as the party aimed to represent itself as an Islamic party. Furthermore in 1985, the PPP was required to change the party's emblem from the Ka'abah in Mecca

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<sup>79</sup> Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance*, p. 2

<sup>80</sup> Michael Morfit, 'Pancasila: the Indonesian state ideology according to the New Order government', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 21, no. 8, August 1981, p. 846-7



to a star derived from the official symbol of Pancasila.<sup>81</sup> Most importantly, being elected did not necessarily confer an MP or parliament as a whole with the power to have a say in budgetary, control and legislative matters as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution. The DPR was an asymmetrical and passive partner to the executive branch of the Indonesian political system. Its use was more oriented towards discussion for policy making but not as law-making body rendering it powerless.<sup>82</sup> By holding elections while containing popular expressions, David Jenkins quite rightly notes:

...the government up[held] the letter of the Constitution while steadfastly ignoring the principles and intent. The president went to great lengths to present himself as a strict constitutionalist and provided all the formal trappings of popular sovereignty, as specified in the Constitution. There was a People's Consultative and a People's Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR). There were periodic elections and secret ballots. The president was "elected" by the MPR, and his ministers and senior officials made routine appearances before the DPR's committees to report back to the people's representatives and answer questions about the government's policy. All of this meant very little. The Legislative branch lived very much in the shadow of the executive; in the MPR of 1978-83, 86 per cent of the 920 representatives owed their positions in one way or another to their selection by bodies that were largely under the influence of the president or his chief lieutenants.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Liddle, 'Indonesia in 1987: The New Order at the Height of Its Power', p. 184

<sup>82</sup> Hein, 'Indonesia in 1989 A Question of Openness', p. 225; Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Galvanising Politics', 20 April, 1989, p. 27

<sup>83</sup> David Jenkins, *Suharto and His Generals: Indonesian Military Politics, 1975-1983*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1984), p. 37

Various mechanisms were in place to ensure Golkar's landslide victory. As the New Order progressed, these smaller groups were soon marginalized and the bureaucracy and military dominated Golkar. The amalgamation of various political parties under the PPP and PDI banner had resulted in internal divisions and each party bearing no clear identity. Consequently, this prevented either party from becoming effective political organisations or a serious contender against Golkar. The 'floating mass', a depoliticisation strategy, made sure that the two quasi-opposition parties, the PPP and the PDI, were prevented from campaigning at the village level. It was predominately aimed at appeasing the lower classes.<sup>84</sup> A group of Chinese Christian students close to Ali Moertopo, Soeharto's long time intelligence aide that supported the New Order in its early days had helped formulate the new concept in fear of an Islamic revival.<sup>85</sup>

The justification for the floating mass was noted by Ali Moertopo, one of the chief architects of the New Order was that politics should be confined to the centre down to the district level. As he notes: '...it is only right to attract the attention of mainly the village people away from the political problems and ideological exclusiveness to efforts of national development of their own rural societies'. He continues to emphasise '... people in the villages will not spend their valuable time and energy in the political struggles of parties and groups, but will be occupied wholly with development efforts', strongly indicating that the New Order elites placed economic development above political activities.<sup>86</sup> Civil servants played an active role in campaigning for the Golkar. Together with the reserved seats for the military and

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<sup>84</sup> Aspinall, 'Indonesia: broadening oppositional base', in Roden (ed.), *Political Opposition in Industrialising Asia*, p. 220

<sup>85</sup> Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, p. 94

<sup>86</sup> An excerpt from Ali Moertopo's *Acceleration and Modernisation of 25 Years' of Development* in Bourchier and Hadiz (eds.), *Indonesian Politics and Society A Reader*, p. 48

appointed seats to various groups carefully screened, the New Order had a firm position in the political system.<sup>87</sup>

The military's involvement to ensure Golkar's victory cannot be stressed enough. As Rachmat Witoelar, Golkar's secretary-general from 1988-1993 noted in 'the past elections the military was responsible for 50% of Golkar vote, the bureaucracy 25% and 25% from the party itself'<sup>88</sup>. The army's territorial structure, which ran parallel with Indonesia's administrative structure, not only warranted the army's control of the population from the capital down to the village level but also enabled it to keep a close eye on, and nudge its civilian counterparts when needed.<sup>89</sup> The military's presence was felt in many respects including travelling, which needed the military's permission. The military also made decisions on specific targets such as particular members of parties or local leaders within the community who drew too much attention from the people. Furthermore, the military decided on the type of operations, known as "Guidance Operations" or *Opsgalagan* that should be launched against them. Consequently, the military had control over nearly every aspect of political and social life of the population through its own territorial structure.<sup>90</sup>

While politics of elections closed down channels for any form of potentially effective opposition, the state made certain that social forces were also co-opted into a number of state corporatist organisations. This ultimately linked a governmental body to a specific segment within society through compulsory membership for all those concerned. Prominent corporatist organisations included *Kadin*, the Chamber of

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<sup>87</sup> Case, *Politics in Southeast Asia Democracy or Less*, p. 48-9

<sup>88</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Paradox in the Polls', 10 June 1999, p. 27

<sup>89</sup> Jenkins, *Suharto and His Generals*, p. 43

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, p. 42-44

Commerce and Industry which co-opted the business sector. Another example is the *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (Indonesian Council of Islamic Teachers or MUI).<sup>91</sup> In most cases, at the very least a handful of members belonging to these corporatist organisations would aim to develop closer ties to the government. Like political parties or any state constituted body, corporatist organisations are also susceptible to state intervention in internal matters.

As the bureaucracy grew, Soeharto also extended his control through the bureaucracy through compulsory membership of KOPRI (Indonesian Civil Service Corps) that was the only social organisation civil servants was permitted to join. KOPRI, in turn, was required to ally itself with Golkar. The state went as far to interfere into private matters in areas such as marriage and divorce. From 1978 onwards, P4 programmes were in place. They were used to indoctrinate the bureaucracy. Courses were also offered to businessmen and students to learn the importance of Pancasila. Any civil servant holding the rank below cabinet minister was required to undertake a two-week P4 course from eight in the morning to six in the evening that solely taught the importance of the state ideology, Pancasila as a justification for its policies.<sup>92</sup> Content of the courses echoed the buzzwords of the New Order or what was known as the 'trilogy of development'. This included equal development, increasing economic growth as well as national security and stability. How the government perceived its utmost importance was exemplified in its strict regulations regarding the upgrading during the course. Attendance was compulsory and missing one class, the attendee had to start the entire programme from the beginning. Exams were taken to assess the

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<sup>91</sup> Liddle, 'Soeharto's Indonesia: Personal Rule and Political Institutions', p. 73

<sup>92</sup> Morfit, 'Pancasila: the Indonesian state ideology according to the New Order government', p. 839

overall performance of each bureaucrat which was important in the consideration for promotion.<sup>93</sup>

Various strategies so far mentioned including patrimonialism and high economic growth rates provided rewards for many sections of society. Elections and corporatism which were utilised ensured participation from social forces. As mentioned earlier, integralism and Pancasila promoted harmony and unity; however, it also gave the military the legitimacy to respond to opposition with an iron fist. Fighting along side the nationalist movement against the Dutch, the army perceived itself creator rather than an instrument of the state. Its involvement also became its justification for its role in politics which was upheld by *dwifungsi*, the military's ideology. It was the only military organisation in Southeast Asia that has a legal and ideological basis for its role in politics.

The state-in-society approach assumes that with the ability to control social forces comes the effectiveness of mobilising the population. The greater the social control, the more the state can achieve in terms of their goals and how the rules of the game should be.<sup>94</sup> Increasing social control is reflected in three indicators including compliance, participation and legitimacy. The military's territorial structure, high economic growth and patrimonial ties ensured compliance from the population. Corporatist institutions and political parties guaranteed participation from the population at all levels. Indonesians supported the highly centralised nature of the New Order; thus, giving the New Order the legitimacy to act in order to avoid a situation of political instability and economic turmoil similar under Sukarno. Overall,

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p. 839

<sup>94</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*, p. 52

the New Order had significantly high levels of social control. Only a few sporadic incidents of social opposition such as Malari riots, Petition of Fifty and social demands for openness during the late 1980s show that the Indonesian state dominated social forces.

### **Post-Soeharto Indonesia**

In reference to Liddle's depiction of Soeharto's New Order as 'all anchor and no sail', David Bouchier describes B.J. Habibie's interim administration as 'a dingy in a storm, battered by the fickle winds of international capital and a domestic demanding political reforms, justice and food'<sup>95</sup>.

It would be a gross misjudgement to say that the economic crisis was solely responsible for bringing an end to the New Order. Soeharto not only survived a severe test when he took over power but throughout the New Order he had also overcome the turmoil of economic ills which has only served to enhance his grip on power. While maintaining high growth rates, the New Order had a firm grip on politics and political opposition never posed a serious threat throughout its 32 years in power. However, placing too much importance on the Asian Financial Crisis as a causal factor of Soeharto's downfall does obscure other factors at play. The political system had grown brittle near the end. Factions among the elites were more apparent, the economy was not only dependent on foreign capital but was also monopolised by the president's family and cronies.

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<sup>95</sup> David Bouchier, 'Habibie's Interregnum: *Reformasi*, Elections, Regionalism and the Struggle for Power', in Chris Manning and Peter van Diermen (eds.), *Indonesia in transition: social aspects of reformasi and crisis*, (London: Zed Books, 2000), p. 15

What seemed like a deviant case beyond the explanation of classical political theories, capitalist development had perhaps gradually brought about a political conscience class under the extreme orderliness of the New Order. Consequently, a once strong government vis-à-vis society began to unravel.

The economic crisis stripped Soeharto clean of resources which he depended on to maintain his system of patronage and contain social forces.<sup>96</sup> As such, the economic crisis should be treated as a crucial precipitating factor which triggered a series of events. In the past, Soeharto had managed to keep his elites content and maintained support through a web of patrimonialism while pursuing a few technocratic necessities important for economic growth such as deregulation policies that were implemented during the 1980s. However, while flirting with deregulation, Soeharto, his family, cronies and bureaucratic families still benefited from monopolies, access to bank credits and industrial projects.<sup>97</sup> Unfortunately for the New Order elites, the IMF had imposed remedies for the country's economic ills which as a result placed Soeharto in a dilemma of continuing to support his cronies or adopting technocratic remedies.

It soon became apparent how crucial strong economic growth was to the longevity of the New Order. Rival groups that had been cultivated and maintained by Soeharto had given way to elite disunity as tensions and cracks amongst the New Order elite began to surface. As early as 1997, Amien Rais, a university lecturer and a figure who had connections with a number of modernist Muslim organisations announced that he would stand to compete against Soeharto in the 1997 elections. He later played a role

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<sup>96</sup> Case, *Politics in Southeast Asia Democracy or Less*, p. 52

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p. 55

in supporting the opposition especially students groups in their bid to topple the New Order.<sup>98</sup> Military commanders had also allegedly been masterminding anti-Chinese violence.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, disunity amongst the commanding ranks began to surface between General Wiranto and General Prawono Subianto, Soeharto's son-in-law.<sup>100</sup>

In the run up to Soeharto's resignation, five private channels began broadcasting daily pictures of angry protesters who took to the streets demanding for political and economic reform. In a once controlled information society, the population watched as the army shot students at Trisakti University on 12 May. Reports poured in on the mass human rights abuses in Aceh, West Papua and East Timor, tarnishing the reputation of the armed forces. As the media coverage poured in, calls for the military to abandon its *dwifungsi* doctrine became louder.<sup>101</sup>

Though social forces were strong, opposition to Soeharto and the New Order lacked leadership and co-ordination. Amien Rais, the most vocal and confrontational of the three, was leader of the Muhammadiyah, a Muslim group claiming 28 million members. Abdurraman Wahid leader of NU, which boasted 34 million Muslim members, was less direct in calling for reform. Finally, there was Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of Indonesia's first president, who took on a more symbolic role as opposed to an active one. The three beacons of *reformasi* found it hard to unify themselves which left the only functioning institution with the role of the power broker: the army. The disunity amongst the civilian elite and an absence of civilian

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 59

<sup>99</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Playing with Ire', 5 March 1998, p. 18

<sup>100</sup> Kevin O'Rourke, *Reformasi The Struggle for Power in Post-Soeharto*, (NSW: Allen&Unwin, 2002), p.71-3; Case, *Politics in Southeast Asia*, p. 63

<sup>101</sup> Bouchier, 'Habibie's Interregnum: *Reformasi*, Elections, Regionalism and the Struggle for Power', p. 27



leader to replace the former dictator prevented a total collapse of the regime and also set the trend for post-Soeharto politics.<sup>102</sup>

It is unclear what lay behind the army's uncharacteristic restraint. Apart from the incident at Trisakti University, the army had shown no sign of intervening. While trying to accommodate student demands, Wiranto did not side with the reformasi bloc to challenge Soeharto's authority. As the riots intensified, the situation forced the army to choose between its patron and the people. The military's restrained attitude towards the situation ignited speculation that loyalty was shifting.<sup>103</sup> Did the military perceive intervention as potentially harmful to its reputation as well as the nation? Or had the division amongst the ranks prevented the army from taking action?<sup>104</sup> Alternatively, perhaps a once defiant army had bowed to the pressures of the international community.<sup>105</sup> However, the wave of reformasi was strong and Soeharto's days were clearly numbered. Ultimately, the military had no choice but to comply and side with the victors. The reformers had prevailed over a fragmented and bewildered army, an unimaginable thought only a couple of months back.

When Soeharto stepped down on 21 May 1998, the political system was not only in complete disarray but was also disoriented. The economy, which had once enjoyed high growth rates, was rapidly deteriorating. The dormant society of the New Order was calling for reformasi. The upsurge in ethnic conflicts in areas such as Ambon and secessionism in East Timor, Aceh and Papua which had been long suppressed, ignited fears of 'Balkanisation' amongst the elite and stimulated debate among Western

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<sup>102</sup> Marcus Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism, and Institutional Resistance*, (Washington DC: East-West Center, 2006), p. 8

<sup>103</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'The Line of Fire', 21 May 1998, p. 20

<sup>104</sup> Vatikiotis, *Indonesian politics under Suharto*, p. 91

<sup>105</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'To the Barricades', 14 May 1998, p. 24

academics.<sup>106</sup> The new political landscape was an extreme opposite of that of the New Order. The most significant difference was that state power had considerably weakened vis-à-vis social forces. As illustrated in the first half of this chapter, the state had the ability to mobilise the population. State corporatist institutions ensured participation from the population and the bureaucracy. As the majority of the population did not wish to return to the same conditions of an ailing economy and political instability of that of the Old Order, this created the legitimacy for a strong centralised government. Overall, low levels of challenges and civil unrest throughout the archipelago indicated conformity and legitimacy during the New Order. Social forces demanding reformasi and Soeharto's removal signified a shift in state-society relations. The reformasi period clearly indicated a reduction of social control or the levels of participation, compliance and legitimacy the state enjoyed during the New Order. Once the calls for reformasi became louder, Habibie, Soeharto's hand picked successor, had no other choice but to accede to the demands of society.

As one of Soeharto's cronies, Habibie lacked popular support. His plans to develop Indonesia's industry sector left international lenders astounded.<sup>107</sup> He had a strong role in extending state industries and was also a member of a politico-business family with links with the Soeharto family businesses and Chinese conglomerates.<sup>108</sup> Hence, his commitment to reform was questionable. Habibie was essentially Soeharto's choice and a consequence of Soeharto's Javanese style of divide and rule and therefore, lacked the support at the elite level. Most importantly, he failed to

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<sup>106</sup> For example, Donald Emmerson, 'Will Indonesia Survive?' *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2000; Anne Booth, 'Will Indonesia Break up', *Inside Indonesia*, No. 59 July -Sept 1999, [www.insideindonesia.org](http://www.insideindonesia.org), accessed 22 February 2004

<sup>107</sup> The Economist, 'Indonesia's New President on a tide of troubles', 16 May 1998, p. 81

<sup>108</sup> Richard Robison and Vedi R. Hadiz, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia The Politics of Oligarchy in the Age of Markets*, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), p. 188

command the backing of the army. Only too familiar with Habibie's precarious position, before his resignation Soeharto bluntly mentioned: 'If I step down and the vice-president takes over will this end the crisis?' Finally, the army supported Habibie but only as a constitutional duty. In early June, Wiranto urged Indonesians to do the same.<sup>109</sup>

According to Soeharto and the 1945 Constitution, Habibie was to complete Soeharto's term that would expire in 2003. On the contrary, many saw Habibie as a transitional figure until elections were held. Most importantly, his administration was perceived as an extension of the New Order which in substance it was. Dubbed as the New Order II, one prominent political and economic reform lawyer noted that 'the only thing missing from the New Order II is Soeharto'<sup>110</sup>. From the 1997 election, the highest legislative body (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*, MPR) still consisted of 500 appointed members; 325 of the seats in national parliament (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*, DPR) belonged to Golkar, 75 to the military, 11 to the PDI and 89 to the PPP.<sup>111</sup> The cabinet approved by Soeharto was in tact and General Wiranto still held positions of the Minister of Defence and Chief of Armed Forces. The only minor changes were the replacement of Habibie's critics with his cronies. However, Habibie still lacked support at both the elite and grassroots levels. As the voices of the reformasi bloc became louder, he had no other choice but to go along with the tide of reform in an attempt to cling on to his presidency.

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<sup>109</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Getting on with it', 25 June 1998, p. 20-1

<sup>110</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Class struggle may supersede racial conflict', 29 July 1998, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 29 July 1998

<sup>111</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Divided they stand', 12 March 1998, p. 22

Habibie inherited a multiplicity of problems from his predecessor. Habibie's challenge was maintaining a balance between appeasing social forces demanding for reform, or at the very least appearing to be, while having to contend with and depend on various elements strongly associated with the former New Order. Taking on a multiplicity of problems including a rapid retracting economy and mounting debts, Habibie had no choice but to abide by the IMF prescription for the country's economic ills. Consequently, this meant the New Order elites were required to answer to corruption charges indicating a major shift in power relations.<sup>112</sup>

### ***Reformasi***

Habibie immediately began a process of political liberalisation by easing state controls in various aspects ranging from the media to political parties. And at the very least on paper, Indonesia experienced a remarkably good start to democratic reform. In preparations for the first-ever democratic elections post-Soeharto, the number of seats of the MPR was reduced from 1,000 to 700; 500 of which were DPR seats. The allocated seats to the military had only reduced from 75 to 38 which proved to be a grave disappointment for the reformasi bloc. During first two decades of the New Order, parliament saw a steady increase of the number of military personnel. In 1967, 43 seats out of the 350-member-DPR belonged to the military. The number increased from 1985 onwards, the military claimed 100 seats out of 500-member parliament but this was later reduced in 1997 to 75.<sup>113</sup> Though for the time being the military retained some power in parliament, this was only temporary and the seats reserved for the army were phased out by the 2004 elections and replaced by a senate-like Regional

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<sup>112</sup> Robison and Hadiz, *Reorganising Political Power in Indonesia*, p. 188

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p. 159

Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Daerah*, DPD).<sup>114</sup> In total, four representatives were elected from each of the 32 provinces. The DPD's function are limited to giving inputs concerning centre-regional issues, such as regional autonomy and regional budgets, and lacks any right to legislate. The DPD's limited powers must be seen in the context of the 17,500-scattered islands and a history of secession. For anxious nationalists and the military, more power devolved from the centre would mean a risky step closer to federalism and a step further away from the unitary state.

Another pressing issue was making amendments to curtail the president's power once enjoyed by Sukarno and Soeharto. The president's term is now limited to two-five year terms. Bills passed by the legislature would become a law within a month regardless of the president's approval.<sup>115</sup> The president is also required to submit annual progress reports to the MPR. The summoning of former President Abdurraman Wahid by the DPR to answer questions concerning the sacking of two Cabinet Ministers, which was followed shortly by his impeachment over corruption allegations of Buloggate and Bruneigate in 2001, illustrates two clear examples of the amendments in practice limiting the power of post-Soeharto presidents.

Another significant step towards electoral reform was dismantling the New Order's three-party-system to allow genuine competitive elections. Consequently, the various constraints imposed on party formation and parties were removed changing the face of electoral laws imposed during three decades of the New Order. Pancasila was abolished as the sole ideology imposed on mass organisations and political parties but

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<sup>114</sup> Jakarta Post, 'DPD set to play an important role in the political system', 10 March 2004, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 10 March 2004

<sup>115</sup> Robison and Hadiz, *Reorganising Political Power in Indonesia*, p. 224

still retained its status as the state philosophy.<sup>116</sup> As result, there was an upsurge in Islamic based parties. The PPP one of the former two quasi-opposition parties reverted back to Islam as the ideological basis of the party. As a result of these changes, Indonesia initially saw the birth of more than a hundred parties. However, to curtail the number of competing parties in the 1999 elections, parties were required to have branches in at least half of the districts in nine of Indonesia's 27 provinces.<sup>117</sup> Further restrictions were made in time for the 2004 elections. Only parties that, in the 1999 elections, won 2% of the DPR seats or 3% of the provincial government (DPRD) seats in half the provinces and districts were allowed to contest the 2004 national elections.<sup>118</sup> Parties were also allowed to merge or dissolve to form a new party, but they had to meet the new criteria stated in the general election law.<sup>119</sup> The rationale for these changes was to reduce the number of smaller parties.

Under Soeharto's New Order, various depoliticisation strategies such as 'the floating mass' were in place to ensure landslide victories for the Golkar. Such restrictions were removed and political parties enjoy more freedom during the campaign period. However though freedom has been enhanced, political campaigning can hardly be called meaningful. Electoral campaigning during the Soeharto years was dubbed *pesta demokrasi* (fiesta of democracy) which more often focussed on the fiesta rather than the substance of democracy. Little has changed in this respect. During the campaigning period in post-Soeharto elections, political parties still make endeavour

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<sup>116</sup> Suryadinata, *Elections and politics in Indonesia*, p. 61

<sup>117</sup> Edward Masters, 'Indonesia's 1999 Elections: A Second Chance for Democracy', *Asia Society Publications*, [www.asiasociety.org/publications/indonesia/](http://www.asiasociety.org/publications/indonesia/), accessed 4 April 2004, p. 7

<sup>118</sup> Altogether six parties from the 1999 elections met these requirements: Crescent Star Party (PBB), United Development Party (PPP), National Mandate Party (PAN), National Awakening Party (PKB), Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), and the Golkar Party

<sup>119</sup> International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), 'Some Questions about the Electoral System for the 2004 Indonesian Elections Answered', Revised January 2004, [www.ifes.org](http://www.ifes.org), accessed 15 February 2005

to bedazzle their supporters with *dangdut* (local pop music) and shower them with giveaways such as t-shirts, bottled water, in some cases money, even though this violates the electoral law.<sup>120</sup> Little is spoken of ideology. Political parties lacked any form of ideological commitment instead were more concerned about horse-trading and forming alliances to ensure survival. Rather, the focus in elections was on familiarising voters with the party's emblems and the number on ballot papers.<sup>121</sup> Campaigning were also characterised by money politics. Militia groups political gangsters closely connected to political parties are still featured during the campaigning period.<sup>122</sup> Major political parties have their own paramilitary groups. For example, the National Awakening Party (PKB) has *Banser*, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) has *Satgas* and PPP has *Partai Pemuda Islam*.<sup>123</sup> Because the parties of former Presidents Wahid and Megawati both continue to rely on paramilitary groups there has been no initiative to have them banned.

Other areas of reform were more contentious. The active role of the bureaucracy and the military in politics and elections came under fire when radical reformers called for their complete withdrawal. Formerly, the Golkar had heavily relied on the support of Indonesia's estimated 5.1 million civil servants.<sup>124</sup> Both the PPP and the PDI strongly opposed the civil servants continue its role in this respect which would surely give Golkar the prolonged advantage over the newly established parties as well as relatively more established ones such as PPP. On these grounds, it was decided prior

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<sup>120</sup> For examples of such practices see Jakarta Post, 'Parties break rules, big money for 'supporters'', 26 March 2004, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 26 March 2004

<sup>121</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Campaigners outshone by singers, rallies', 22 March 2004, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 22 March 2004

<sup>122</sup> Robison and Hadiz, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia The Politics of Oligarchy in the Age of Markets*, p. 225

<sup>123</sup> Leo Suryadinata, 'Indonesia: Continuing Challenges and Fragile Stability', *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004*

<sup>124</sup> Masters, 'Indonesia's 1999 Elections: A Second Chance for Democracy', p. 7

to the 1999 elections that civil servants on active duty were not to take part in campaigns nor were they permitted to take up a position in a political party.

What bearings did democratic reforms have on power relations between state segments as well as relations between state and society? The New Order set out to achieve an organic state where there was no space for societal opposition against the state. The structures of cooptation and repression were in place to ensure compliance. The need for a strong government gave the New Order the legitimacy. Corporatist institutions guaranteed participation. Consequently, the Indonesian state under Soeharto had very little limitations in implementing its policies, norms or rules in most policy areas.

However, society's domination over the state only lasted from Habibie's interim administration in 1998-99 to Wahid's administration in 2001. As the state began to gradually consolidate thereafter neither the state nor society dominated the other; subsequently, resulting in what Migdal terms dispersed domination. The extent social forces can transform the state's policies, rules or norms, was dependent on the strength of social forces which in turn affect the state's effectiveness. Demonstrations and protests challenging state policies have taken place in absence of repressive responses from the state indicating a more relaxed political context. Furthermore, corporatists institutions under the New Order that still remain<sup>125</sup> have to compete with organisations newly established ones outside structures associated with the state.

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<sup>125</sup> For example, there has been an increase in the number of trade unions post-New Order. Formerly, there was only official trade union, All Indonesia Workers Union (FSPSI). See Andrew Rosser with Kurnya Roesad and Donni Edwin, 'Indonesia: the politics of inclusion', *IDS Working Paper 229*, July 2004, [www.ids.ac.uk/ids/](http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/), accessed 16 May 2006



Likewise, political parties could compete freely in elections without interference of the state.

The situation post-Soeharto bore very little resemblance to that of the New Order where the state could command participation from the population through its corporatist institutions. This is a stark comparison to the various mechanisms during the New Order which were in place to ensure that social forces posed very little challenge to the state. The economic stagnation brought about a reduction in compliance. The military's role in politics and society had been reduced after the introduction of the New Paradigm; though, in my final analysis I will argue that the military did manage to retain some influence in politics and decision-making. However though the new political context has brought about increased channels for collective action, Hadiz and Robison have argued that marginalised groups during the New Order still remain marginalised. Three decades under Soeharto's rule has hindered the ability to organise and capacity within these groups.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, Andrew Rosser et al. argue that formerly marginalised groups still lack the resources to influence policymaking.<sup>127</sup> Though some are sceptical, there is no doubt the once dominant state has dramatically transformed.

In regards to relations amongst the elite, the contest between political factions or coalitions between elites have consequently made the DPR and MPR genuine areas of contest between political parties as opposed to the parliament under Soeharto where members were advised to closely abide by the 4 Ds: *dafter, duduk, duit, diam*,

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<sup>126</sup> Robison and Hadiz, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia The Politics of Oligarchy in the Age of Markets*, p. 10

<sup>127</sup> Rosser with Roesad and Edwin, 'Indonesia: the politics of inclusion', p. 11-14

(register, sit down, take your pay and stay quiet). The increased role of parliament at both levels also had an impact on reducing the relative autonomy of the executive.

However, competition in parliament may not be entirely what the reformasi bloc had envisioned or hoped for. Horse-trading and shifting coalitions have come to define post-Soeharto politics. This was clearly illustrated during the 1999 and 2004 elections. As such, democratisation did not mean a complete overhaul of the old system rather elements of practices during the New Order still remained. Robison and Hadiz argue reforms only resulted in old predatory power relations within a new system of parties, parliaments and elections and within new alliances which are central to post-Soeharto politics.<sup>128</sup> In addition, the arrangements created new tensions that also had to contend with emerging social forces. In comparison to the New Order 'pyramid', intra-elite relations are now more dispersed and have rarely been predictable. As having a close relationship with Soeharto guaranteed several benefits, the New Order elites were competing against one another partially as a result of Soeharto's strategy of divide and rule. Furthermore, politics at both the local and national level were dominated and influenced by the military and bureaucracy. After Soeharto, political power was no longer concentrated at the core power base but was dispersed amongst the emerging political parties. As a state bearing elements of corporatism, authoritarianism and patrimonialism had unravelled, businesses that formerly relied on the state for protection and subsidies had to turn to political parties and influential members in parliament as alternative sources of influence.<sup>129</sup> Consequently, politics became a game of coalition building and an unpredictable game of shifting alliances.

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<sup>128</sup> Robison and Hadiz, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia The Politics of Oligarchy in the Age of Markets*, p. 223

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, p. 226

The new rules of the game quickly became apparent in the run up to the 1999 elections. Megawati's party PDI-P scored well in the elections, however, her party's victory did not guarantee her presidency. As the nation geared up for the first democratic election post-Soeharto, the popular choice, Megawati as a child of Sukarno and as a symbol of struggle against the oppression of the New Order, gave her party a great boost in the 1999 elections.<sup>130</sup> However, the nearly blind cleric, Wahid, and old time friend of Megawati's resumed the top position. Her party topped the polls with 34% followed by Golkar with 22%. Her party's success in the polls translated into 153 seats in the House when compared with Wahid's PKB which only managed to garner 12% of the votes placing his party with the fourth most seats in parliament.

A few months after the downfall of Soeharto, Indonesian Muslim leaders both conservative and progressives threatened to issue *fatwas* forbidding a woman to become president due to Megawati's increasing mass popularity. Among the political leaders arguments varied. On one hand, the traditionalist Muslim leaders were divided. The PPP was extremely against the whole prospect of having a female leader while the PKB was more flexible. On the other hand, the modernists largely refrained from the debate. Amien Rais' PAN, PBB, and the Justice Party (PK) had doubts about her leadership skills and her commitment to reform the country as opposed to her gender.<sup>131</sup> However by July 2001, many Islamic leaders who spoke against her had dramatically changed their stance. Many appeared in her cabinet, for example Hamzah Haz became her Vice President. Only a minimal amount of protestors

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<sup>130</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Mother Earth', 3 June 1999, p. 22-3

<sup>131</sup> Bernhard Platzdasch, 'Islamic reaction to a Female President', in Manning and Van Diermen (eds.), *Indonesia in Transition: social aspects of reformasi and crisis*, p. 338

bothered to turn up when she became president. As such, Megawati's failure to become president after the 1999 election had less to do with a gender bias and more to do with her own inability to engage in political maneuvering.

Though the PDI-P emerged as the strongest party, her party still did not enjoy the majority vote in parliament. Gaining 34% of the votes meant that she still needed to build a coalition among the reformist parties such as the PKB and PAN.<sup>132</sup> Possibly the three reformist parties could have come up with a reasonable power sharing agreement. Instead, she continued to speak among close friends about having a similar government to that of her father's. Along with her own insistence that the top position was her natural birthright Megawati flatly refused to approach what she referred to as 'the small parties'. This indifference to politicking brought two long-term rivals Amien Rais and Wahid together. Rais assembled the Islamic parties calling it the Central Axis or *poros tengah*, and offered the presidency to Wahid. Indeed the alliance did achieve their goal and Wahid was sworn in as fourth president with 373 votes against Megawati's 313.<sup>133</sup>

Similar elements of power brokering and shifting of coalitions continued to define elite dynamics in the 2004 elections. Though PDI-P and Golkar were the top two runners in the legislative elections, this did not guarantee their candidates success in the presidential elections. In 2001, the MPR made amendments to the Constitution which paved way for direct presidential elections.<sup>134</sup> This proved to be a major

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<sup>132</sup> Wahid's PKB had 51 seats and Amien Rais' PAN gained 34 seats or otherwise having the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> most of seats in parliament, respectively.

<sup>133</sup> For more details see Marcus Mietzner, 'The 1999 General Session', in Manning and Van Dierman (eds.), *Indonesia in Transition: social aspects of reformasi and crisis*, p. 49

<sup>134</sup> Presidential pairs were nominated by parties or coalitions that either garnered 3% of the seats in the DPR or 5% of the popular vote in the April legislative election. The conditions were that the victorious

obstacle for a smooth running post-election period as the majority of votes had gone to larger and more established parties in the legislative elections. However, voters did not necessarily endorse the presidential candidates of these parties. Instead, the popular choice for president was Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (or now popularly known as SBY) whose party only managed to garner 8% of the vote in the legislative elections.

As a result, the DPR was divided between two coalitions. The president is supported by the People's Coalition<sup>135</sup> which secured a minority of the vote. On the other hand, the Nationhood Coalition holds 60% of the seats and vows to be an "extra-critical balance" to the SBY leadership, consequently, disrupting the workings of the government.<sup>136</sup> Despite a bumpy start, SBY and Jusuf Kalla have managed to consolidate their positions.

Political reforms have removed the resources crucial to the New Order's control over society. The military has long had a crucial role in Indonesian politics and society. It was also important in ensuring opposition was kept under control. However, political reforms reduced though did not completely remove the military in politics as I will address in the following section.

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pair must gain over 50% of the popular vote, of which 20% must come from at least half of the provinces. See International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Indonesia backgrounder: a guide to the 2004 elections', Asia Report 2004, no. 71, [www.crisisweb.org](http://www.crisisweb.org), accessed 18 December 2003, p. 5

<sup>135</sup> The People's Coalition consists of the Democrat Party (PD), National Mandate Party (PAN), United Development Party (PPP) and Justice Prosperity Party (PKS).

<sup>136</sup> Tempo Interactive, 'Controlling Senayan, But Not Fully', 5-10 October 2004, derived from [www.tempointeractive.com](http://www.tempointeractive.com), accessed 5 October 2005

## *Reforming the Armed Forces*

Reforming the armed forces has not been straight forward either. As one of the main pillars of Soeharto's New Order, public anger towards the military was high. Protests were aimed at the military's socio-political role and called for military officers to be held accountable for mass human rights abuse committed in the past. However, the context of political instability worked to prolong the military's role and political power during Indonesia's time of turmoil and consolidation.<sup>137</sup> After Soeharto's resignation, social forces shifted their attention to other concerns such as the removal of dwifungsi.

However, putting promises of reform into practice has been no easy matter. Change in behaviour and Indonesian military culture that has been institutionalised for more than three decades will take time. The rush of initiatives to reform during the first six months after Soeharto's downfall indicates the institution's need to respond to public demands and to recover the public's trust in the military. Argumentatively, the military did not have much of a choice.

The relationship between the military and President Habibie was that of mutual dependence. With the lack of popular support, Habibie depended on the military for stability. On the other hand, the military depended on Habibie to appoint military officers and the distribution of resources and most importantly, the manoeuvrability to set the pace and extensity of its own reforms.<sup>138</sup> Despite Habibie's limitations, he

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<sup>137</sup> Jun Honna, *Military Politics and democratization in Indonesia*, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 1

<sup>138</sup> Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism, and Institutional Resistance*, p. 10-11

dismantled several of the New Order practices which hindered the growth of democracy. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, several initiatives were implemented which set the pace for democratisation in the post-Soeharto era such as relaxed restrictions for political parties and the media and the removal of the bureaucracy from campaigning for Golkar. A few leading figures within the military led by then Lieutenant Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono developed a doctrine known as the 'New Paradigm'. This entailed the disposal of the military's dual function which included the reduction of seats in the DPR reserved for the military, the separation of the military and the police, and the severance of the military's ties with Golkar. All these new initiatives had affected the military's hegemony and direct influence within Indonesian politics.<sup>139</sup>

Though the military's dominant position has been significantly reduced in post-Soeharto Indonesia, the military still had an important position within the Indonesian polity. The fragmentation of civilian politics resulted in continued military presence in politics that in turn affected the quality of reform.<sup>140</sup> And although reforming the armed forces had a good start, other areas were seriously neglected such as the military's territorial structure which guaranteed the military a considerable amount of funding independent of the central government. A study conducted by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) in 1998 estimated that the military business assets were more than US\$ 8 billion in 1998.<sup>141</sup> This revenue is utilised to support 75% of the

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<sup>139</sup> For more details on the New Paradigm see Angel Rabasa and John Haseman, *The Military and Democracy in Indonesia: Challenges, Politics, and Power*, (Santa Monica, C.A.: RAND, 2002), chapter 3

<sup>140</sup> Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism, and Institutional Resistance*, p. 16

<sup>141</sup> Lesley McCulloch, 'Business as usual', *Inside Indonesia*, No. 63, July-September 2000, [www.insideindonesia.org](http://www.insideindonesia.org), accessed 5 February 2003

military's spending.<sup>142</sup> This is crucial to the military's capacity; thus, the reforming of the Indonesian armed forces. As I will mention in the next chapter, this enabled the military to retain a remarkable amount of capability to take its own initiatives as it did so to disrupt the referendum in East Timor. This also shows that reforms during this period were superficial and did not fundamentally transform civil-military relations or the military's influence in anyway. Though the removal of *dwifungsi* had reduced the military's direct role, failure to include the military's territorial structure in the reform agenda has failed to address the very reason why the military has become so embedded within Indonesian society and politics.<sup>143</sup> Though some reform initiatives post-Soeharto reduced the military's hegemonic position, some become advantageous. The newly enacted decentralisation laws of 1999 had facilitated the transfer of power and financial resources to the regions. Consequently, the military already entrenched in the regions through the territorial structure benefited from the new initiatives of power devolution.<sup>144</sup> In sum, though the military had been stripped of its direct influence in politics, it still managed to remain influential.

In August 1998, *dwifungsi* was formally replaced by the New Paradigm which enhanced the military's role in external defence and abolished its role in politics. One of the first few changes included the military formally changed its name from ABRI to Indonesia's Armed Forces (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, TNI).<sup>145</sup> This signified the reduction of its socio-economic and political role and the separation of the police

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<sup>142</sup> Sukardi Rinakit, *The Indonesian military after the new order*, (London: Taylor & Francis, 2005), p. 167

<sup>143</sup> McCulloch, 'Business as usual'; Also see Rinakit, *The Indonesian military after the new order*, p. 14

<sup>144</sup> Rinakit, *The Indonesian military after the new order*, p. 15

<sup>145</sup> 'TNI' portrays a good image in the eyes of the population and nostalgia when the army had a close relationship with the people. ABRI, on the other hand, is associated with the military's violent behaviour.



(POLRI) from ABRI. Consequently, the responsibility of maintaining internal security was passed on to the police while the military would take up the duties of external defence. However, exceptions have further complicated the reform of ABRI. Problematic areas such as Aceh and Papua, where the army's presence is justified by the on-going conflict provide an exemption to this new rule.

There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, the TNI has built up the capacity to deal with conflict-prone areas after three decades of taking control of internal security matters during Soeharto's rule. Indonesia's internal security practices derive largely from the Soeharto years. To maintain strong control, Soeharto gave the army sweeping powers to manage Indonesia's internal security issues while the police were merged with the army in 1961 as a 'junior partner'. The revenue that both the police and military derive from conflict areas intensifies the competition over who is in charge. Consequently, tensions have often arisen between the military and the police which have resulted in clashes.<sup>146</sup> Though various reforms are in place, the territorial structure of the army is still intact. The threat of disintegration has provided the military with a strong argument for retaining its privilege. Furthermore, rapid dismantlement of the structure would leave thousands of officers unemployed. It is generally known that officers find other means of substituting their inadequate salaries by both legal and illegal means.<sup>147</sup> The military's involvement in business started as early as 1957 when the military took control of the Dutch enterprises. As the government does not provide the military with sufficient resources to fund its basic functions, their businesses are crucial in specific regions such as Aceh where the military have a stake in the oil and gas field in Lhoksemawe, North Aceh. The

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<sup>146</sup> Rinakit, *The Indonesian military after the new order*, p. 139

<sup>147</sup> International Crisis Group, 'Indonesia: Rethinking Internal Security Strategy', Asia Report No.90, December 2004, <http://www.crisisweb.org>, accessed 20 December 2003, p. 15

military's involvement in legitimate business does not violate the law and is a known "secret" which is generally accepted by the public.<sup>148</sup>

What impact had reforms had on TNI's role and position in the state? How does this affect its role in managing secessionist regions? The popular demands for the removal of *dwifungsi* showed a reduction in complicity within social forces. Though the military's position within the polity is no longer dominant as it was during the New Order, evidence shows that the military is not completely under civilian control either. In some situations, the TNI has exemplified itself as a relatively independent body. Its ability to instigate violence in some situations such as in East Timor showed its capability of carrying out its own agenda. Another example would be the sectarian violence between the Muslims and Christians in Poso, which occurred in 2000, where documents showed military and police providing sides with arms to fan the conflict.<sup>149</sup> The military is powerful because of its far-reaching territorial structure, yet fragmented due to Soeharto's legacy of divide and rule.

As mentioned earlier, the context of continued political instability and ethnic violence, both inter-ethnic as in Ambon (in 1998) and secessionism in Papua, East Timor and Aceh has provided the military with a powerful justification to have a continued great say in internal security. Implementing reforms in the area of politics has also had little effect. As briefly mentioned, the military had to give up the 38 reserved seats in parliament. Reforms also required the military to adopt an apolitical stance and sever all links with Golkar. The reduction in seats in the DPR reserved for

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<sup>148</sup> Bradford, 'The Indonesian Military as a Professional Organization: Criteria and Ramifications for Reform'

<sup>149</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Police, soldiers 'fanned' Poso sectarian war', 2 February 2006, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 2 February 2006

the military, which were finally phrased out in 2004, did not reflect the military weakened influence in politics. The military still commanded a certain degree of leverage in parliament and especially politics at the local level through its territorial structure. Furthermore, the military could also obtain seats from the DPD and political parties. Retired generals such as Wiranto and the current President Retired General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono both featured strongly in the 2004 elections as presidential candidates. All in all, the military has adapted well to the changing dynamics and power structures within the new political environment.

Dynamics between the military and the post-Soeharto presidents illustrate how reforming the military is no easy matter. What is problematic is how the military reserves the right to set the boundaries of what the military classifies as civilian interference in its internal affairs; hence, making the concept of civilian supremacy a far cry from complete. In the early stages of Wahid's presidency, the military had expected the president to allow some leeway in implementing its internal reforms. However, the military's expectations were a far cry from reality. Barely sworn in, Wahid began to interfere with the military's internal affairs when Wiranto conducted a reshuffle in November 1999. Both parties had conflicting views on who should become the new Chief of Staff. Though a compromise was reached, the new Chief of Staff was appointed, based on Wahid's presidential instruction. Consequently, this gave Wahid high hopes that this would ultimately provide him with the much-needed control over the military and enable him to speed up internal reforms.<sup>150</sup> On the contrary, this only led to an intense contestation between Wahid and the military, especially when Wiranto was removed as Coordinating Minister for Politics and

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<sup>150</sup> Rinakit, *The Indonesian Military After the New Order*, p. 134

Security. Wahid's interference in what was perceived as the military's internal affairs was seen as too aggressive, particularly in relation to internal reforms.

Wahid's effort to gain some control over the military has failed miserably. His attempts to promote officers who supported reform within the military had minimal impact on the military as an institution.<sup>151</sup> To make matters worse, Wahid had also alienated his allies and caused further controversy for his enemies creating an excuse to outmanoeuvre him. Wahid's PKB only managed to muster 10% of the seats in the DPR and though this did not seem a problem at the time when parliamentarians gathered their support for his bid for presidency, Wahid's own failure to share power amongst other political parties cost him his presidency as opposed to the actual allegations of corruption in 2001 per se. Wahid's interference with what was seen as the military's internal affairs and insistence on speedy reforms had not only diminished the military's support for his government but also heightened a sense of resentment towards him. The military influenced its own representatives in parliament, parliamentary members and political parties to censure Wahid in the alleged involvement in two graft scandals: *Bruneigate* and *Bulogate*. Wahid was suspected of embezzling funds from the *Yanatera Bulog Foundation* and accepting a grant from the Sultan of Brunei.<sup>152</sup>

Tensions rose to the point where there was speculation that a coup could take place which was subsequently denied by the officers. However, the prospect of such a coup did not seem to bother Wahid due to the military's battered image during the New Order in the eyes of the population and international pressure for Indonesia to

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p. 199

<sup>152</sup> For more details see International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Indonesia's Presidential Crisis', Asia Briefing No. 5, 21 February 2001

democratise.<sup>153</sup> Though a coup never took place, Wahid was soon removed from office by the impeachment process on 1 February 2001 and replaced by Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Mietzner argues that civilian fragmentation led to the consolidation of the military's self-confidence. 'The erosion of Wahid's civilian support base removed one of the major preconditions for the successful implementation of radical military reform'<sup>154</sup> as opposed to the military's working behind the scenes to sabotage the reforms. As the presidential crisis deepened, Wahid became increasingly isolated from those that had formerly backed his bid for presidency. In a last attempt to ensure political survival, Wahid threatened to declare a state of emergency. The military's refusal to back the president's wishes enabled the military to prove their 'intentions' to uphold the TNI's New Paradigm, its neutrality and its repudiation to be an instrument of civilian bickering.<sup>155</sup> Similarly, the military back in the 1940s and 1950s presented themselves as apolitical institution above all partisan politics. The military has adapted well to the reforms in post-Soeharto era; consequently, has maintained a certain degree of influence, though it is not as dominant as before.

Megawati's harsh critics were quick to attribute her ascendancy to the popularity of her father's legacy. Many also argue that she lacked sufficient knowledge about policymaking, is politically conservative and is renowned to shy away from the

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<sup>153</sup> Rinakit, *The Indonesian Military After the New Order*, p. 150

<sup>154</sup> Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism, and Institutional Resistance*, p. 27; Rizal Sukma and Edy Prasetyono, 'Security Reform in Indonesia: The Military and the Police', Working Paper 9, Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' Conflict Research Unit, February 2003, [www.clingendael.nl/publications/2003/20030200\\_cru\\_working\\_paper\\_9.PDF](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2003/20030200_cru_working_paper_9.PDF), accessed 8 November 2006, p. 29-30,

<sup>155</sup> Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism, and Institutional Resistance*, p. 29

media. She declines any invitations to debate, citing that it is not the Indonesian way.<sup>156</sup> Despite her shortcomings, the economy gradually picked up and unemployment and inflation rates decreased during her presidency. And unlike her predecessor, Megawati had the backing of the military. The implementation of internal reforms started during Wahid's presidency but because of the tension between the president and the military as an institution, the military only reluctantly carried out partial reforms. Megawati learned from Wahid's experience that pressurising the military to go back to the barracks would only endanger her presidency.

However, non-interference with the military's internal matters was not only a result of her predecessor's experience. Megawati was also widely known for nationalistic views and her own soft approach towards the military. In comparison to other political parties, PDI-P is one of the political parties that has the largest number of retired generals joining the party. Altogether 150 retired generals joined the PDI-P, a figure that only matched that of Golkar. Four generals were appointed as cabinet ministers under Megawati's administration. Hence, the change of leadership proved beneficial to both the new president and the military. Past experience has shown that obtaining the backing of the military has proven crucial to the survival of the president. The rise of Megawati provided the military an opportunity to regain its socio-political role.<sup>157</sup> This also coincided with the dip in the public enthusiasm and euphoria for reform. An opinion poll conducted in August 2003 by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) indicated that 58% voters believed their welfare was better looked after under the New Order. On the international level, the bombings in Bali 2002, at the Marriott in

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<sup>156</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 'Mother Earth', June 1999, p. 22-3

<sup>157</sup> Rinakit, *The Indonesian Military After the New Order*, p. 213

2003 and in front of the Australian Embassy in 2004 brought the war on terror to Indonesia. This factor, as Mietzner argues brought an end to international isolation of the Indonesian armed forces since outrage of mass human rights abuses in East Timor became public. As a result, the war on terror became a factor enhancing not only the military's role internally but also as an international partner in the war on terror.<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, with the loss of East Timor and negotiations with GAM going nowhere, parliamentarians became increasingly supportive of military approaches in conflict areas. Subsequently, the change in attitude not only hindered the reform agenda within the military but it also brought back the military to the forefront of and policy making concerning internal security.<sup>159</sup>

The relevance of this relationship was that Megawati gave the army considerable influence over policy making in conflict areas.<sup>160</sup> This is illustrated in the case of Aceh which was placed under martial law in May 2003. Martial law was later extended in the form of civil emergency which continued to give the military full reign over the region for another year. In turn, this has prompted many activists to believe that the conditions under Megawati's policies did not differ when the region was placed under the notorious banner of a Military Operational Area (*Daerah Operasi Militer*, or DOM) during the New Order. The military's commitment to maintaining unity of the nation is a known fact and is exemplified in *Sapta Marga* or seven oaths which have remained untouched since the collapse of the New Order. The oaths confer the military the duty of defending and responding to attacks against the

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<sup>158</sup> Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism, and Institutional Resistance*, p. 40-41

<sup>159</sup> Harold Crouch, 'Political Update 2002: Megawati's Holding Operation', Edward Aspinall and Greg Fealy (eds.), *Local Power and Politics Indonesia: Decentralisation & Democratisation*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), p.20

<sup>160</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Rethinking Internal Security Strategy', p. 49

Pancasila state even those posed by civilian leaders. And it is the legacy of the dwifungsi mindset that provides an important justification to oppose the civilian supremacy over national-defence issues.<sup>161</sup> The 2002 Constitutional amendments further supported the military's duty of 'defending, protecting and preserving the unity and sovereignty of the State', and thus, reinforced the military's authority to fulfil its role as protector of the Pancasila state.<sup>162</sup> The relationship between the president and the military will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Before his victory in the first ever-direct presidential elections in 2004, retired general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono had gained himself a reputation of being a member of the reformist bloc within the military. Despite this reputation, SBY concentrated more on sidelining conservative military personnel such as General Ryamizard Ryacudu, who became one of the strongest critics of 2003 peace talks in Aceh, as opposed to initiating any further reforms. Consequently, the president sent out a strong message that he was prepared to remove any senior officer who had any potential to disrupt his policies.<sup>163</sup>

SBY was in a stronger position than his predecessors. Though his political party only gained a marginal 8 percent of the votes in the 2004 legislative elections, SBY has become popular in his own right. His popularity had gradually increased since serving under Megawati's administration as Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs and further increased after a dispute with the president and her husband who

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<sup>161</sup> Rinakit, *The Indonesian military after the new order*, p. 200

<sup>162</sup> Bradford, 'The Indonesian Military as a Professional Organization: Criteria and Ramifications for Reform'

<sup>163</sup> Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism, and Institutional Resistance*, p. 49-50



described SBY's behaviour as 'childlike'.<sup>164</sup> This was complemented by vice president Kalla's position within the Indonesian polity. Kalla, the chairperson of Golkar, and winner of the 2004 elections, has also formed good relations with major Islamic groups. Together SBY and Kalla have mustered a considerable amount of support from the DPR and Islamic groups for their intended actions. Further details of this will be given in Chapter Five.

### *Decentralising the State*

Another crucial area of reform was a nationwide plan for decentralisation. Authority and power within local institutions has been greatly enhanced and formally acknowledged through decentralisation laws of 2001. The aim of decentralising the state was to appease social forces in the restive regions such as Aceh and Papua. Both Sukarno and Soeharto ruled a highly centralised political system. However, the transition in 1998 brought about a significant transformation in the distribution of power. Federalism as a system of governance is nothing new to Indonesians. Before departing the archipelago, the Dutch implemented federalism in Indonesia for fear of Javanese dominance. However, the foreign imposed system was quickly dismantled and the state continued to centralise before reaching its extreme form during the New Order.

The debate on federalism as a means of managing ethnic relations in Indonesia was re-introduced by Amien Rais, one of the leading figures that backed student-led protests against Soeharto and the New Order. Soon after the country entered the

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<sup>164</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Delivering the Message', 22 April 2004, p. 13; Jakarta Post, 'Susilo quits after open rift with Megawati', 12 March 2004, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 12 March 2004

transition period, Amien Rais established his new political party, the National Mandate Party (PAN) which advocated federalism as a solution to the country's increasing ethnic unrest.<sup>165</sup> According to PAN as well as many academics<sup>166</sup>, the extreme centralised state under the New Order gave rise to ethnic discontent especially in resource rich areas. Aceh illustrates the point. The federalists believe that there is a positive co-relation between decentralisation (especially economic) on one hand and eliminating ethnic discontent on the other.

On the other side of the debate are PDI-P, Golkar, PKB and the Indonesian military. Furthermore, as the public did not endorse the idea, Amien Rais soon became less vocal in his bid for a federal state. The 'unitarians' have instead argued that managing ethnic relations can still be achieved within a unitary state but granting the regions genuine autonomy.<sup>167</sup>

There are two laws on decentralisation which dismantled the excessively centralised state during the New Order. Firstly, Law No. 22/1999 which serves to give the regions a much greater say in administrative matters. For example this includes the right to elect regional executives. Secondly, Law No. 25/1999 indicates the financial relationship between the centre and the regions. However decentralisation via these two laws meant decentralisation of power to the districts and not the provinces. This is to prevent the administration at the provincial level from gaining too much power to the point where it can break away from the state. Paradoxically, this significantly

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<sup>165</sup> CU Zenzie, 'Indonesia's New Political Spectrum', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 39, No. 2, p. 257-8; Gabriele Ferrazzi, 'Using the "F" Word: Federalism in Indonesia's Decentralization Discourse', *Publius*, Vol. 30, No. 2, p. 77

<sup>166</sup> For example see Schmitt, 'Foreign Capital and Social Conflict in Indonesia 1950-1958'

<sup>167</sup> Rizal Sukma, 'Conflict management in post-authoritarian Indonesia', in Kingsbury and Aveling (eds.), *Autonomy and Disintegration in Indonesia*, p. 67

differs from special autonomy offered by the central government to Aceh and Papua which in turns strengthens the province and not the districts. Though the central government has been surprisingly generous with its offer, special autonomy has done little to dispel ethnic discontent in both regions. There are great many issues at hand. Little has been done to educate the population in Aceh as well as Papua concerning the offer. Very few of the elites support it. Most importantly, full effects of special autonomy have yet to be realised. For example, the implementation of martial law which was later reduced to civil emergency in Aceh, overrides special autonomy. The details will be discussed at length in the following chapters.

## **Conclusion**

As I have argued in this second half of this chapter, the downfall of Soeharto and the New Order has brought about many changes, though the degree of these changes will vary from sector to sector. The most prominent of the changes are undoubtedly state and society relations. With the opening up of the media, heightened awareness as well as other democratic reforms has increased public scrutiny on how power is exercised amongst the elite. Competitive elections and the removal of restrictions on political parties have ultimately reduced the state's capacity to command participation from the population. Changes in the political system have enhanced the role of parliament as a genuine contest between political elites and parties. In this respect, political power is no longer concentrated amongst a few but dispersed amongst several shifting alliances or what Migdal would label as dispersed domination where neither society or the state possesses the ability to establish domination throughout the state. This in turn has reduced the influence of the bureaucracy and the military which formerly featured

strongly in politics during the New Order. A highly centralised state has also made way for nationwide decentralisation and special autonomy offered to Papua and Aceh, though the effect of autonomy has yet to be realised.

Social demands for the removal of the military's *dwifungsi* indicate an increase in complicity from the population. Though various measures have been implemented to reduce the role of the military in politics, they have not entirely achieved the aim of removing military personnel from politics. The territorial structure of the TNI is still in tact. Consequently, the military subordination to the civilian government is far from complete. According to the state-in-society approach legitimacy involves the acceptance of the state's rules as true and right. As the population did not wish to return to the situation under former President Sukarno, the leaders of the New Order possessed the legitimacy to act. The situation post-Soeharto is a stark difference to that under the New Order where various structures were in place to ensure social stability. The downfall of Soeharto brought a reduction in social control and the state's ability to mobilise the population. Though varying to different degrees, post-Soeharto governments do not possess this legitimacy as the New Order once did.

## **Chapter 4**

### **East Timor**

This chapter explores the interactions between social forces, state segments, and external involvement. Based on the assumptions put forward by the state-in-society approach, state segments and social forces may join forces with one another or amongst themselves to support or contradict the state official action. International involvement may enhance or limit the state or a social force's ability to act. In the previous chapter, I have explored the relationship between the state and society in the light of the three indicators including participation, legitimacy and compliance which demonstrate the levels of social control within Indonesia from the Soeharto era to post-1998. Levels of participation, legitimacy and compliance or social control was high under Soeharto, was low during Presidents Habibie and Wahid, and dispersed under Presidents Megawati and SBY. The persistent demands for sovereignty in East Timor show that the state failed to gain any substantial social control. This lack of social control means that the Indonesian state had very limited impact in terms of Migdal's key indicators: participation, legitimacy and compliance. I will concentrate on act of resistance in East Timor.

The case study of East Timor is divided into two instances: East Timor under Soeharto and Habibie. The first section of the chapter will show that social forces in East Timor posed very little limitations to the state's policy options. This was due to mutual empowerment or high levels of social control in other areas in Indonesia. However, the state would not have been able to carry out its action had other states

such as the US not supported the annexation of East Timor. Hence, the position of the dominant Indonesian state was enhanced by the international non-intervention response to the invasion.

The latter half of the chapter explores the dynamics between the state segments that opposed state action in managing secessionism in East Timor in post-Soeharto Indonesia. After the collapse of authoritarian rule, the state was no longer dominant over social forces. It was an opportune moment where multiple conflicts occurred which sapped the strength of the state. Consequently, Habibie conceded and offered special autonomy. The majority of East Timorese deemed the offer insufficient. Habibie took it a step further by offering the East Timorese the chance to conduct a 'popular consultation' to decide on the territory's future. The decision was deemed extremely unpopular amongst state segments such as the military and the PDI-P. However, it was the military that possessed the means to carry its own initiatives to disrupt the state's official action. However, it was a combination of opposition from society or low levels of social control within Indonesia and pressure from other states as well as Habibie's own agenda to position himself as a reformer which resulted in the change of policies towards East Timor. Details of this will be explored in the following sections below.

### **East Timor under the New Order**

In this section, I will analyse the events in East Timor under Soeharto. There are two major state actions worthy of analytical attention. First is the 1975 annexation where I will explore the dynamics behind the Indonesian state's decision to incorporate East

Timor. Second is the 1991 Dili incident. The period between the two events will be briefly mentioned but will not be given much analytical attention due to lack of changes between the external, state segments and social forces. Details of these two events will be discussed below.

### ***Historical Background to the 1975 Annexation***

The island of Timor is situated north of Australia. In 1859, the Dutch and Portuguese divided the island. East Timor was administrated by the Portuguese while the western half of the island was colonised by the Dutch. East Timor has an area of 14,609 square kilometres. There are currently close to a million inhabitants, 90% of which practise Roman Catholicism. Since independence, Tetum and Portugese have become the official languages of East Timor.

With the exception of the anti-communist campaign of 1965-66 that resulted in an estimated half a million deaths, the annexation of East Timor in 1975 has been a source of great embarrassment to Jakarta. The invasion of the half island was a task that the army set to complete within weeks. Reality was a different matter. What was initially thought to be a quick and easy task turned out to be a war that dragged on for decades.

An unexpected window of opportunity for the East Timorese came during the month of April 1974 when the left wing leaning army staged a coup that brought an end to almost five decades of authoritarian rule in Portugal. The new government that replaced that of former dictator, Marcello Caetano was committed to dismantling the

Portuguese empire. Although still lacking a national movement, East Timor was incorporated in Portuguese decolonisation plans.<sup>1</sup> However, the situation on the domestic front as well as war in Angola and Mozambique was draining the Portuguese of its scanty resources, making East Timor the last of the Portuguese concerns. Consequently, this opened an opportunity for potential Indonesian intervention.

The news of the coup in Lisbon travelled fast and within a matter of weeks several political parties, which were originally banned, were formed in East Timor. Each was based on the question of the territory's political future. The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) that was founded by Mario Carrascalao and who later became the governor of East Timor was committed to forming a federation with Portugal for a certain period of time. This was to be followed by complete independence. A week later, the Social Democratic Association of East Timor (ASDT) was formed which included prominent figures such as Jose Ramos Horta and Xanana Gusmao. However, just months after its formation, ASDT changed its name to the Revolutionary Front of East Timor, popularly known as *Fretilin*. Fretilin was another major party that claimed much of its support from the younger generation of Timorese and middle-ranking officials. Similar to UDT, Fretilin wanted an independent East Timor. On the other hand, there was the Association for the Integration of East Timor into Indonesia. The name summed up the party's objectives well. It later changed its name to the Timor People's Democratic Association (*Apodeti*) but nevertheless failed to muster the same level of popularity of the former two parties. The two other parties, *Kota* and *Partido*, barely attracted attention let alone any substantial support for its agenda. At this stage, Apodeti's limited support, which was estimated at 5 per cent of East

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<sup>1</sup> Hamish McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia*, (Blackburn, Victoria: Fontana Books, 1980), p. 192



Timor's population,<sup>2</sup> was a clear indication that at the very least the majority in East Timor did not want to be incorporated with Indonesia.

So what was the Indonesian state's response to the developments in East Timor? While political activity increased in East Timor, Indonesia officially remained firm that it would not interfere with East Timor's internal affairs. Indonesia had never shown much interest in the Portuguese colony. Before the Indonesian revolution against the Dutch, the 1945 Constitutional Committee had expressed interests in claiming East Timor on the basis of the ancient unity of the *Majapahit Empire*.<sup>3</sup> However, the idea quickly dissipated during the revolution. Since independence until the incorporation of Papua in May 1963 (then known as West New Guinea), Jakarta had always made claims to the territory on the grounds that it should inherit what was formerly a part of the Dutch East Indies. As a result, Jakarta never made claims to other territories such as East Timor. Such claims would only counter the premise of Indonesian claims for Papua. As late as June 1974, Foreign Minister of Indonesia Adam Malik confirmed to Jose Ramos-Horta, one of the founding members of Fretilin, in a letter that, 'the independence of every country is a right of every nation, with no exception for the people of Timor. The government as well as the people of Indonesia have no intention to increase or expand their territory, or to occupy other territories...'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 201

<sup>3</sup> McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia*, p. 191

<sup>4</sup> Excerpts of this letter from Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik to FRETILIN's Jose Ramos Horta, 17 June 1974 can be found in Jose Ramos-Horta, *Funu The Unfinished Saga of East Timor*, (Trenton, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1987), p. 43; the letter can also be found in full length in Jolliffe, *East Timor Nationalism and Colonialism*, p. 66

However, Adam Malik's statement was the official view. Other state segments in Jakarta had different ideas of how East Timor's political future should take shape. Shortly, after the overthrow of the former regime in Lisbon, John Naro, the Deputy Speaker of the DPR, raised the issue of returning 'East Timor to the fold of Indonesia'.<sup>5</sup> The military supported the idea. Ali Murtopo, Benny Murdani and Pangabean, then Defence Minister, all supported the incorporation of the former Portuguese colony. Based on the military's obsession with unity, an independent East Timor could set a precedent to other movements both within the country and the region. However, whether an independent East Timor would have an affect or set an example for Aceh and Papua to follow suit is questionable as East Timor was under Portuguese rule and not part of the former Dutch East Indies.

Indonesia also had other concerns. After the fall of Indochina in April 1975, Jakarta had become active in building good relations with its neighbours to create a conflict-free zone. With East Timor's decolonisation process underway, Jakarta's fear was two-fold. Firstly, an unsettled East Timor could potentially attract a western power meddling in Indonesia's backwaters; thus, becoming an obstacle in achieving a conflict-free zone.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, there was a concern about having an unsettled region that not only had the potential to invite the Vietnamese government to intervene but also to become a support base for other communist insurgencies within the region.

By late 1974, Ali Murtopo, one of Jakarta's top generals and key advisor to Soeharto and one of the strongest proponents of the annexation of East Timor, took charge of

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<sup>5</sup> Ramos-Horta, *Funu The Unfinished Saga of East Timor*, p. 43; McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia*, p. 193

<sup>6</sup> Gary E. Hansen, 'Indonesia 1975: National Resilience and the Continuity of the New Order', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (1976), p. 156

Timorese affairs. Consequently, this marked the start of Indonesia's plans to incorporate East Timor under its wing. The odds were on Jakarta's side as Portugal which was still preoccupied with its own internal problems, had shown very little interest in the increasing political activity in East Timor; hence, turning a blind eye to Indonesia's plans to expand its territory.<sup>7</sup>

Jakarta took a multi pronged strategy to the East Timor project. A full-fledged military operation was put on hold. Instead, Jakarta began *Operasi Komodo* which essentially included driving a rift between the Timorese. This strategy would be complemented by propaganda to discredit UDT as neo-fascist and Fretilin as communist via the radio and the newspaper, *Berita Yudha* (belonging to Ali Murtopo's group). On the international front, intellectuals at Murtopo's think-tank, the Centre of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) set out on a diplomatic mission to inform other states of Indonesia's concerns and to gain consent for its plans for East Timor.<sup>8</sup>

Despite much preparation, it was a year later when Indonesia embarked on a military operation to incorporate East Timor into its territory. In January 1975, the UDT and Fretilin announced that they were joining forces in a coalition for national independence. However, the coalition was terminated in May by the UDT after two of its leading members paid a visit to Jakarta. Rumours had indicated that Fretilin had socialist and communist leanings. In June, talks were held in Macau by a commission on Timorese decolonisation in attempt to bring the three parties to an agreement on the timetable of the elections. Fretilin boycotted the Macau talks on the grounds that

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<sup>7</sup> Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 201

<sup>8</sup> For details on Jakarta's non-military strategies to incorporate East Timor see McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia*, p. 194-204

any discussion with Apodeti concerning self-determination would be worthless because of its political stance.<sup>9</sup> The absence of Fretilin provided the opportunity for Apodeti to pose itself as the leading party and the UDT to step up on its anti-communist attacks against Fretilin.

In the meantime, Jakarta continued with its propaganda against Fretilin but it was not long until the government made its next move. In August 1975, the military instigated an UDT-led coup which soon broke into civil war. In the meantime, the Portuguese administration withdrew from the territory turning a blind eye to the situation in East Timor. The UDT had underestimated Fretilin's ability to respond and by September 1975, Fretilin had gained control of the territory. The Portuguese Colonial Army, which predominantly consisted of Timorese after the majority of Portuguese had left, supported Fretilin. During the civil war the army quickly formed the Falintil (Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor).

Migdal argues that the mobilisation of the population can enable the state to carry out its action autonomous from other social forces but also gain strength when facing external foes.<sup>10</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Three, social forces within Indonesia other than those in regions demanding independence were co-opted by corporatist institutions and the patrimonial system. Furthermore, social forces also upheld the concept of organicism for fear of political instability. In part, the Indonesian state's ability to carry out its actions in East Timor can be explained through the mutual empowerment of social forces. However, though the Indonesian state remained dominant over social forces which in turn increased its capacity to carry out its

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<sup>9</sup> Ramos-Horta, *Funu the Unfinished Saga of East Timor*, p. 52

<sup>10</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*, p. 52

actions, there is evidence to show that Indonesia would not have gone head with the invasion of East Timor had it lacked the backing of other western states. The delayed invasion of East Timor can be partially explained by the Pertamina crisis in 1974-1975. A few believe that Soeharto was reluctant to go along with the military's grand designs of annexing East Timor which had the potential to alarm overseas donors especially when the Indonesian military was dependent on American aid.<sup>11</sup> The situation changed in favour of Jakarta once it started to play on western fears of a potential addition to the communist bloc.

This begs the question of what role did external forces play? On 28 November 1975, Fretilin declared the Democratic State of East Timor. Though receiving recognition from a handful of states, it failed to receive any acknowledgment from Portugal. As a result of this, the UN has continued to recognise Portugal as the legitimate administrative authority of East Timor up until the territory had gained independence more than two decades later. On the other hand, most governments gave their backing to Jakarta's annexation of East Timor, even if implicitly. Five journalists including two Australians, two British and a New Zealander, reporting on the 1975 invasion were murdered in Balibo on 16 October while covering the situation. The incident failed to draw out any reaction from the reporters' respective governments. Jakarta took the silent response as a green light to go ahead with the invasion.<sup>12</sup>

Following the announcement, Jakarta reacted immediately by creating the UDT-Apodeti alliance and declaring that East Timor was integrated with Indonesia. The

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<sup>11</sup> Ramos-Horta, *Funu the Unfinished Saga of East Timor*, p. 1; McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia*, p. 208

<sup>12</sup> For a personal account of one of the relatives of the murdered Briton, Brian Peter, who lobbied for a formal inquest of the circumstances surrounding his death see Maureen Tolfree, 'Balibo: The Cover-up that Led to Genocide', Paul Hainsworth and Stephen McCloskey (eds.), *The East Timor question: the struggle for independence from Indonesia*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), p.41-50

military attack on Dili was planned for 5 December coinciding with US President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's arrival in Jakarta. Though there was no opposition to the military invasion per se, Jakarta was asked to postpone its plans to 6 December until after the president had left.<sup>13</sup> The US ambassador to Jakarta reiterated Washington's position but expressed concerns that the invasion should be conducted 'quickly, efficiently, and don't use our equipment'<sup>14</sup>. However, Kissinger later clarified the matter by pointing out that it all depended 'on how we construe it whether it is in self-defence or is a foreign operation'<sup>15</sup>. On 7 December, plans went ahead.

To fully understand why East Timor never received any support for independence during this period despite the on-going decolonisation process in Africa, it is crucial to realise the context of international events. Firstly, governments were prepared to overlook Indonesia's incorporation of East Timor for the sake of a few economic returns.<sup>16</sup> Secondly, at the height of the Cold War, Indonesia had no trouble getting the blessing from other countries such as the United States and Australia. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Soeharto came to power by eradicating Indonesia's some half a million communists in 1965- a move that clearly indicated Soeharto's distaste for the western opposed ideology. Consequently, Soeharto's Indonesia became of important strategic importance to the western bloc.

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<sup>13</sup> William Burr and Michael L. Evans (eds.), 'East Timor Revisited Ford, Kissinger and the Indonesian Invasion, 1975-76', *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 62*, [www.gwu.edu](http://www.gwu.edu), accessed 4 September 2005, p. 2

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 5

<sup>15</sup> Embassy Jakarta Telegram 1579 to Secretary State, 6 December 1975 containing the text of Ford-Kissinger-Suharto Discussion, Gerald R. Ford Library, [www.gwr.edu](http://www.gwr.edu), accessed 4 September 2005

<sup>16</sup> Taylor, *The Price of Freedom*, p. xi

During the mid-1970s, the US had suffered from its own losses in Indochina and it began withdrawing troops from the region. At the time, Ford and Kissinger were keen on strengthening US relations with anti-communist governments in the region.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, convincing the US of Jakarta's plans for East Timor was not difficult while the experience of the Vietnam War was still fresh in mind. It came as no surprise when Soeharto received support from Ford after informing the President that 'those who want independence [in East Timor] are those who are Communist-influenced'.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the Americans also wanted to maintain its access to deep-water straits running through Indonesia so its submarines could pass freely through the Indian and Pacific Oceans. With such an agenda, the US abstained from any UN resolution condemning Jakarta's invasion of East Timor.<sup>19</sup> President Ford was also suspicious of the new regime in Lisbon which replaced Salazar's dictatorship. The US government had gone as far as considering the idea of expelling Portugal from NATO. As far as President Ford and Kissinger were concerned, Portuguese interests were of little consequence to Indonesia's potential plans for East Timor.<sup>20</sup>

Australia's concerns were keeping good relations with Indonesia and had doubts about East Timor's viability as a state should it gain its independence. Then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam also went as far as telling Soeharto that the best possible option for East Timor would be integration with Indonesia.<sup>21</sup> Not long after the invasion, Canberra under Malcolm Frazer's administration formally recognised

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<sup>17</sup> Burr and Evans (eds.), 'East Timor Revisited Ford, Kissinger and the Indonesian Invasion, 1975-76', p. 2

<sup>18</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between Presidents Ford and Suharto, 5 July 1975, 12.40 p.m. – 2.00 p.m., Gerald R. Ford Library, National Security Adviser Memoranda of Conversations, [www.gwr.edu](http://www.gwr.edu), accessed 15 April 2004

<sup>19</sup> Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 207

<sup>20</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between Presidents Ford and Suharto, 5 July 1975, 12.40 p.m. – 2.00 p.m.

<sup>21</sup> McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia*, p. 195

Indonesia's jurisdiction over East Timor in exchange for concessions on the Timor Sea dispute. At the time of the 1975 annexation, negotiations on seabed rights and oil exploration were underway.

On the other hand, Portugal's stance during the late 1970s up to the 1980s was less predictable. Despite having severed all diplomatic relations with Jakarta following the invasion of East Timor, Lisbon failed to file any official reports or complaints to the UN.<sup>22</sup> At the time, it had its own internal problems to manage and several independence movements within its African colonies to deal with. As such, it was too pre-occupied to ensure a smooth transition for independence. It has been argued that during this period, Portugal was applying to become a member of the European Community (EC).<sup>23</sup> As such, it was reluctant to take on a strong stand on the issue. Since the UN began issuing resolutions in 1976, most EU (then EC) countries abstained from voting. However, this changed in the course of the late 1980s when Portugal began pushing the East Timor agenda within the EU. It has even been doubted that EU would have devoted any attention to East Timor had Portugal lobbied for it.<sup>24</sup>

With Indochina now fallen to the communist bloc, Jakarta took a more active role in building good relations with non-communist governments in Southeast Asia as well as other governments outside the sub-region to form a sense of solidity.<sup>25</sup> The main fear was that communist governments in the region could support insurgency

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<sup>22</sup> Ramos-Horta, *Funu The Unfinished Saga of East Timor*, p. 57

<sup>23</sup> Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 207

<sup>24</sup> Eilis Ward, 'The Local Meets the Global: East Timor and Ireland's Presidency of the European Union', Hainsworth and McCloskey (eds.), *The East Timor Question The Struggle for Independence from Indonesia*, p. 152

<sup>25</sup> Hansen, 'Indonesia 1975: National Resilience and the Continuity of the New Order', p. 155



movements which could potentially destabilise Southeast Asia. As a result of this fear, a series of meetings took place during 1975-1976 with ASEAN heads of states including the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

As stability was a main concern of ASEAN member states, the content of the meetings involved discussions of military and political relations within Southeast Asia. An ASEAN meeting was held in May 1976 to discuss the neutralisation with Indochina governments and closer military cooperation with ASEAN countries. By September, Indonesia had established military ties with Malaysia and Singapore.<sup>26</sup> However, security was not only a concern of Indonesia's immediate neighbours but trade also made them ignore what was going on internally to avoid jeopardising trade relations with Indonesia.

The UN denounced the Indonesian occupation of East Timor just two weeks after the 1975 invasion of the territory. The only support East Timor received was from the UN General Assembly that adopted annual resolutions from 1976 to 1982 demanding the withdrawal of Indonesian troops and supporting the right of self-determination for East Timor.<sup>27</sup> As Ramos-Horta argues, most that abstained from the UN resolutions on East Timor did so in order to not offend Soeharto and Portugal at the same time.<sup>28</sup> From 1982 onwards, the UN had been facilitating talks between Jakarta and Lisbon to find an acceptable resolution to the East Timorese question. However, talks had never brought any substantial agreements to the table. Though the UN repeatedly condemned Indonesia's illegal occupation, the permanent members failed to come up with any form of resolution on the matter unlike the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Saddam

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 155

<sup>27</sup> Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 206

<sup>28</sup> Ramos-Horta, *Funu The Unfinished Saga of East Timor*, p. 107

Hussein had every right to question the inconsistencies of international conduct when he bluntly asked why Indonesia could make East Timor its 27<sup>th</sup> province and why he could not make Kuwait the 19<sup>th</sup> province of Iraq.<sup>29</sup>

During this period, the Indonesian state possessed high levels of social control within Indonesia as shown in Chapter Three and low levels of social control in East Timor. However, the Indonesian state's capability to invade East Timor was not only dependent on its dominance over social forces, but also the support from many states as well as the indifference of many others. The states supported the annexation of East Timor included the US, Australia as well as neighbouring ASEAN states supported the annexation of East Timor due to the Cold War imperative.

### ***Continued Warfare***

While Apodeti and UDT leaders had been co-opted by Jakarta, Fretilin was able to thrive on popular support. The military had the might to crush a relatively small rebellion; however, guerrilla tactics and support from the local population helped sustain Fretilin even in large areas of inner East Timor. Indonesian troops were estimated at 30,000 in comparison to Fretilin fighters which were estimated at roughly 2,500 men along with 10-20,000 militias.<sup>30</sup> This is an indicator that a considerable bulk of the population supported independence.

A sense of nationalism did not become a salient feature within East Timor until the Indonesian annexation. The Timorese did not fight a liberation war against the

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<sup>29</sup> Theodore Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 431

<sup>30</sup> Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 205

Portuguese. As such, a sense of nationalism was only constructed in response to the Indonesian invaders. Under Portuguese rule, East Timor remained relatively untouched by economic development, education as well as Portugal's 'civilising mission'. Consequently, Timorese rituals, animism and culture still remained a part of the Timorese way of life.<sup>31</sup> The Indonesian incorporation of East Timor into its fold has prompted a surge in Catholicism. The perception of the church is a dramatic change since Portuguese rule when the church was perceived as an ally of the Portuguese colonialists.<sup>32</sup> This draws on similarities with the way the Acehnese constructed their own sense of nationalism which was aimed to differentiate its nationalism from that of the oppressors. While the Acehnese drew on its glorious historical past, the East Timorese have drawn on religion as point of unification<sup>33</sup>. This in turn formed a sense of nationalism and identity that differed from that of Indonesia. During the first ten-year period under Indonesian rule, the Church saw a sharp increase in its membership from 200,000 in 1974 to 400,000 in 1983.<sup>34</sup> In comparison to the period at the end of Portuguese rule, one third of Timorese were Roman Catholic and the rest practised animism.<sup>35</sup> The sharp increase in members of the Catholic Church also indicated the need to move away from anything associated with Indonesia and drawing closer to Portuguese symbols. Similar findings were also noted by prominent journalist Hugh O'Shaughnessy who during a visit experienced a bond and gained trust from the East Timorese because of his ability to communicate in Portuguese.<sup>36</sup> As in Aceh, resentment towards the military had developed following deaths inflicted upon its people, personal accounts of abuse and the forced

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<sup>31</sup> Ramos-Horta, *Funu The Unfinished Saga of East Timor*, p. 14

<sup>32</sup> Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 218

<sup>33</sup> Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, p. 431; Cristalis, *Bitter Dawn East Timor a people's story*, p. 66

<sup>34</sup> Ramos-Horta, *Funu The Unfinished Saga of East Timor*, p. 2

<sup>35</sup> McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia*, p. 191

<sup>36</sup> Hugh O'Shaughnessy, 'Reporting East Timor: Western Media Coverage of the Conflict', Hainsworth and McCloskey (eds.), *The East Timor Question The Struggle for Independence from Indonesia*, p. 35

relocations.<sup>37</sup> As such, discontent and opposition that had the potential to transform into a sense of nationalism cannot be simply eliminated.

East Timor social forces that supported independence were relatively more unified than that in Aceh. According to one NGO worker, this had much to do with the local economy of each region.<sup>38</sup> Aceh was rich in natural resources which resulted in a stratified society. As I will explore in the following chapter, the business community and elites in Aceh were divided. Some benefited from the spoils of the New Order while the disgruntled rest formed GAM, Aceh's secessionist movement.

Unlike the case of Aceh, East Timorese and Papuans were unable to gain positions from the New Order. Consequently, this created unity amongst the population in Papua and East Timor against Jakarta.<sup>39</sup> The bond of unification in East Timor was the common enemy. The division between the supporters for independence and supporter for integration with Indonesia disrupted in 2001 in clashes and has continued until recent times.<sup>40</sup>

In the previous chapter, I have shown that the state under Soeharto possessed high levels of social control which resulted in integrated domination or the state establishing dominance over social forces. Migdal predicts if the state has more social control, it has more capability to carry out its actions. Due to high levels of social control over other social forces which in turn enhanced the Indonesian state's capability, social opposition in East Timor failed to disrupt state action. In other

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<sup>37</sup> Based on numerous discussions and personal accounts.

<sup>38</sup> Telephone Interview with NGO worker frequenting East Timor, 27 January 2007

<sup>39</sup> Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, p. 170

<sup>40</sup> BBC Online, 'E Timor ex-PM accused on unrest', [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), 17 October 2006, accessed 17 October 2006

words, the state possessed relative autonomy over social forces through mutual empowerment with other social forces within the archipelago. The Indonesian state's effectiveness was further reinforced by external support. International support was firmly behind Jakarta up until the 1980s. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, governments were prepared to overlook the sake of a few economic returns.<sup>41</sup> Secondly, at the height of the Cold War, Indonesia had no trouble getting the blessing from other countries such as the United States and Australia. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Soeharto came to power by eradicating Indonesia's political of some half a million communists in 1965- a move that clearly indicated Soeharto's distaste for the western opposed ideology. Consequently, Soeharto's Indonesia became of important strategic importance to the western bloc.

This period shows that Jakarta was never short of new strategies to appease social forces in East Timor opposing the Indonesian state. In 1977, Jakarta adopted the new 'encirclement' strategy which aimed to relocate the population to designated areas. By 1979 it had been estimated that 300,000 Timorese were living in these camps which were located in poor agricultural areas where food was scarce. With this, the Indonesian military adopted another strategy called the fence of legs. This entailed forcing Timorese civilians to walk ahead of Indonesian troops while they advanced into Fretilin areas leaving Fretilin fighters the two options of shooting civilians or holding their fire and being shot at themselves. More than 100,000 civilians, including catholic clergymen, NGO workers and Timorese refugees, were estimated to have lost their lives as a result of this notorious approach.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> John G. Taylor, *The Price of Freedom*, (Bangkok: White Lotus Company Ltd., 1999), p. xi

<sup>42</sup> Taylor, *Price of Freedom*, p. 85-90

The Indonesian military also had an interest in keeping the conflict going which did not bear any relation with the strength of Fretilin's guerrilla wing or popular support for independence. First, the active region provided a good training ground for the Indonesian military. Secondly, like the case of Aceh, the region provided funding for military leaders.<sup>43</sup> This indicates that the state was not confined or influenced by social forces in East Timor but had the ability to control and manage the conflict within the half island.

Eventually in 1980, the Indonesian military had come to the conclusion that Fretilin was of very little threat. To many observers this did seem to be the case. Many senior Fretilin leaders had been either killed or captured. Fretilin armed fighters were estimated at less than 200.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore from the start of 1980, Soeharto introduced the resettlement programme which involved 'voluntary' migrants being reallocated from over-populated areas such as Java and Bali. This transmigration policy aimed to 'de-Timorise' the territory and neutralise the independence movements.<sup>45</sup> The fence of legs strategy also had a profound affect on the movement's supply networks. By the late 1980s, equipped with only a few hundred armed men, the Indonesian government labelled Fretilin as security disturbers and were more of a nuisance than a challenge to the government.<sup>46</sup> The measure of confidence in the security situation can be seen in the government's announcement of East Timor as an open province in 1988. However, the opening of the territory provided an opportunity for disgruntled East Timorese in exile to resume contact with people within. And it was not long until

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<sup>43</sup> Haseman, 'Catalyst for Change in Indonesia: the Dili Incident', p. 760

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p.760

<sup>45</sup> McCloskey, 'Introduction: East Timor', Hainsworth and McCloskey (eds.), *The East Timor Question The Struggle for Independence from Indonesia*, p. 5

<sup>46</sup> Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, p. 209

Fretilin re-grouped and with the support of the population for food and intelligence, and the Indonesian military could do very little to eradicate the movement.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Jakarta had firm control over social forces in other areas; consequently, the state possessed a considerable degree of capability to carry out its actions. State segments did not oppose the state's official action either. Although this was the case, the Indonesian state action to incorporate East Timor was also supported by other states. Had Indonesia lacked this support, it would have most likely failed to do so. The case of 1975 annexation shows that the Indonesian state capability was not only enhanced by social control but also by the support of other states by their non-interference of the Indonesian state action. The turning point in Jakarta- East Timor relations was undoubtedly the Dili incident of 12 November 1991 that brought East Timor's hidden presence to the attention of the international community. Furthermore, the Cold War had ended and the rationale for containing communism had disappeared along with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

### ***The Dili Incident***

The new phase of openness or keterbukaan (also briefly mentioned in Chapter Three) that Indonesia was experiencing at the time also affected the policies towards managing East Timor. In late 1988, Jakarta opened up the territory under the auspices of Operation Smile (*Operasi Senyum*). This entailed the removal of travel restrictions for both Timorese and Indonesians. A number of foreign dignitaries also visited the

territory under tight supervision including Pope John Paul II in October 1989.<sup>47</sup> The change of policy reflected two important changes both in the domestic and international fronts. The resistance movement had become more reliant on political channels as opposed to guerrilla fighting. Consequently, the armed resistance had subsided during this period. On the international front, Portugal had gained acceptance in the European Union and was more inclined to push the annexation of a former European colonies as a European agenda. This resulted in EU calls for Indonesia to withdraw troops from East Timor.

In November 1991, the Portuguese Parliamentary delegation was due to visit East Timor for its first-ever serious investigative mission. Consequently, excitement and tensions amongst the population ran high. However at the last minute, the Indonesian military cancelled the visit on the grounds that it was unwilling to accept the team of journalists that were to accompany the delegation. Members of the independence movement who were involved in the preparations for the visit were left exposed.

The Indonesian military went on an offensive to capture 30 young independence supporters that were seeking refuge in the Motael Church in Dili. The military successfully arrested 25 in all and killed a student, Sebastiao Gomes. On 12 November, a mass memorial for Sebastiao was held in the church. However, the relatively small gathering soon turned into a large crowd. The spark of the incident was a few amongst the large crowd that made their way to the cemetery had carried pro-Fretilin flags and banners bearing anti- Indonesian slogans. Without prior

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<sup>47</sup> Douglas Kammen, 'The trouble with the normal: the Indonesian military, paramilitaries and the final solution to East Timor', in Benedict R.O'G. Anderson (ed.), *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Southeast Asia Publications, 2001), p. 162



warning, the military opened fire indiscriminately on the unarmed procession which resulted in 273 deaths.<sup>48</sup>

Many lives have been lost before this incident. In fact, there was very little fuss when the brutal occupation took place and the worst human rights abuses occurred which carried on until 1982. However, what made the massacre at Santa Cruz different to any previous incidents was that it was captured on film by British photojournalists and smuggled out of the country. The scene was televised worldwide which resulted in a public outcry. Public outrage towards the incident pushed governments of the EU and the United States to consider their stance on the issue.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, international sympathy for East Timor, though not necessarily support for independence, had increased and continued throughout the years. Finally, the international community had begun to see the reality of the situation in East Timor rather than taking Jakarta's word for it.

East Timor had been under a media blackout which was at times nearly complete. The accuracy of the very small amount of reports that were released in the public domain was highly questionable. Though a videotape of the Dili massacre was smuggled out of the country, the image was not shown on Indonesian television.<sup>50</sup> East Timor formerly was not open to travellers, not even to Indonesians unless special permission was obtained. As such, other social segments within the Indonesian state had very little knowledge of what was occurring in East Timor. Though there was a slight change in international support, the Dili incident did not affect the support from other social forces within Indonesia for the Indonesian state's dealings with East Timor.

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<sup>48</sup> Taylor, *The Price of Freedom*, p. xiii

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. xiii

<sup>50</sup> Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, p. 448

In the light of the changing dynamics at the international level and increased level of social opposition in East Timor, the military changed its tack dramatically. Rather than bowing to criticisms, Indonesia ignored it. The main explanation for this was that though international sympathy had increased, it was not enough to influence Jakarta to change its policies towards managing secessionism in East Timor. Though some governments began voicing their criticisms, trading and military assistance continued. At this juncture, states were more concerned about trade. It was not until later when military intervention in the conflict in Kosovo in 1999, led by NATO in absence of a formal blessing from the UN Security Council mandate, shifted concerns from economic and trade relations to more humanitarian grounds. The NATO intervention in Kosovo highlighted the defects of UN Charter which did not account for intervention on humanitarian grounds or moral legitimacy.<sup>51</sup>

Support for East Timor went as far as raising the issue of human rights and awarding Bishop Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996. As a response to East Timor's newfound attention, new tactics were employed to deal with the second generation of Timorese that were supposedly educated and socialised the 'Indonesian way'. For most Indonesians, East Timor is a sensitive subject. East Timorese students attending university in other parts of Indonesia have often dropped out not only due to language problems but also because of how they are constantly reminded of how ungrateful they have been. On the other hand, other regions, which have rebelled against the centre especially during the 1950s, have never endured the accusation of

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<sup>51</sup> David Chandler, 'The Responsibility to Protect? Imposing the 'Liberal Peace'', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 59

being 'ungrateful'.<sup>52</sup> During this period covert operations increased and the use of premen (thugs) was employed to intimidate or act as agent provocateurs.<sup>53</sup> The brief opening that had allowed limited access to the region from 1989-1991 was now completely closed. Operations were now handed over to the Special Forces Unit (*Kopassus*). The ability to open and close the region at will showed the state's autonomy over social forces in East Timor.

In 1992, the military captured the guerrilla leader Xanana Gusmao and Major General Prabowo, then commander of *Kompasus* set out the task of crushing what remained of the movement. Irregular troops such as ninjas, militias under the auspices of *Kompasus* as well as gangs, which mainly operated at night, were deployed to carry out the mission.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, this resulted in a reduction of clashes between the military and freedom fighters. Subsequently, the military began to focus its energy on civilians and supporters of an independent East Timor. It was during this period that the infamous militias that disrupted the 1999 referendum on autonomy were created. And despite the growing criticisms of Jakarta's handling of the renegade province, East Timor witnessed and lived through worsened conditions due to the creation of paramilitary groups. The name the military gave the operations for 1997 sums it up well: *Operasi Tuntas* or 'Operation Eradicate'.<sup>55</sup>

The Dili incident shows that state effectiveness was enhanced in its initiatives towards East Timorese resistance through the mutual empowerment of other social segments within Indonesia. Though the media blackout in East Timor and media censor in the

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<sup>52</sup> Benedict Anderson, 'Imagining East Timor', *Arena Magazine*, No.4, April-May 1993, [www.uc.pt/timor/imagin.htm](http://www.uc.pt/timor/imagin.htm), accessed 22 April 2005

<sup>53</sup> Taylor, *The Price of Freedom*, p. xiii

<sup>54</sup> Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, p. 433

<sup>55</sup> Taylor, *The Price of Freedom*, p. xv

rest of the archipelago deprived the population of any information concerning East Timor, it is doubtful that any social segment would have supported East Timorese resistance. The reasons for this are evident in the material discussed in Chapter Three. I mentioned that there were various structures in place to keep social forces at bay. These included the state's ability to co-opt social forces through rewards such as corporatism and repressive measures which were carried out by the military. Consequently, high levels of social control enabled the state to carry out its actions independent of social opposition in East Timor. This instance confirms the central hypothesis.

Criticisms from other states began to emerge following the Dili incident which in turn increased positive action. Ramos-Horta being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 illustrates the point. However, the state's capability to defy international criticisms did not necessarily correlate with the high levels of social control. While the economy was strong and situation stable making Indonesia attractive to foreign investment, the issue of human rights would not be pushed to the extent that would offend Indonesia. Trade and military relations continued and no other sanctions were imposed that would have any effect on Jakarta's effectiveness to act on its policy options in East Timor.

Though in 1988, Jakarta decided to 'open up' East Timor, this did not reflect a change in social forces or international support for Jakarta. The change in policy was related to the wider context of 'openness' and the diminishing armed opposition. The Dili incident increased international support and the opening up of the territory provided the opportunity for the resistance movement to re-group itself. Though international

interest increased in the aftermath of the Dili incident, there were no positive changes in Indonesia's dealings with East Timor. The instance shows that external factors played a role in the East Timor conflict but cannot be given overall importance as a determining factor. This in turn questions weak state analysis which portrays developing states as incapable of self-rule and dependent on the international system. Secondly, mutual empowerment between social forces and state segments cannot alone account for state capability.

### **East Timor under Habibie**

In 1998, Jakarta was facing a multiplicity of problems which played to the advantage of resistant movements in East Timor and other areas. Nationwide unrest gained momentum which resulted in what Migdal terms as a total transformation of the state. East Timorese activists seized this rare opportunity to stage its own protests against Jakarta. The events during this period transformed state-society relations where the state could no longer maintain integrated domination. Concessions such as conducting 'popular consultation' on the future of East Timor was a result of social forces engaging in multiple struggles which in turn limited the state's policy options. The use of militias to disrupt the popular consultation and later the acceptance of an international peacekeeping force also deserve analytical attention. Details of these events will be explored in the following sections.

In June 1998, students boldly demanded the release of Timorese political prisoners, the right for East Timor to vote on its future via referendum and the correction of

KKN in the provincial government.<sup>56</sup> Pro-independence supporters took advantage of the visit of European Union Ambassadors and gathered in large crowds.<sup>57</sup> Like the Acehnese at the time, groups of East Timorese students staged demonstrations in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There were campaigns throughout August and September calling for all-inclusive talks between all segments of East Timorese society to resolve the 23-year-old conflict. How did the state respond to this new wave of social opposition?

Amidst the mass protests for the removal of Soeharto and his generals and the subsequent call for democratisation, once a strong pillar of the New Order, Indonesia's military had shown a considerable amount of restraint towards what would have been labelled during the days of the New Order as 'civil disobedience'. The Ainaro (in East Timor) military commander, Lt.-Col. Paulus Gatot Rudianto commented: 'As long as they don't disturb other people, we're not going to limit their activities'.<sup>58</sup> From June to September there was a minimal military response to the upsurge in the activities supporting independence despite the gradual increase of troops during the period prior to Soeharto's downfall.

The state response to recent developments in East Timor was similar to the concessions granted to the Acehnese and Papuans at the time, including the release of political prisoners. Another immediate effect was the removal of Soeharto's son-in-law, Lt. Gen. Prabowo Subianto, who managed military operations in East Timor after Soeharto's resignation. The wave of the reformasi movement and the new found

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<sup>56</sup> Kammen, 'The trouble with normal', p. 171

<sup>57</sup> Ian Martin, *Self-Determination in East Timor The United National, the Ballot, and International Intervention*, International Peace Academy Occasional Papers Series, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), p. 20

<sup>58</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Crack in the Wall', 3 September 1998, p. 22

freedoms of the press had brought other charges to light such as the disappearance of students during the New Order. As a result of these charges, he was demoted to head the Bandung Military Academy and later took self-exile in Jordan.<sup>59</sup> Protests emerged outside Cipinang Prison where guerrilla leader, Xanana was held.<sup>60</sup> In June, Habibie announced that he was willing to enhance the provincial status of East Timor to 'special status' though remaining with the republic. This meant that matters of defence, foreign policy and financial affairs were to be directed by Jakarta with remaining internal matters to be managed by the Timorese. Following Habibie's offer of autonomy announced in mid 1998, the details were discussed later between Indonesia and Portugal under the auspices of the UN in August. The sheer fact that the Indonesian state was making concessions at the time illustrated a transformation in state-society relations with the state no longer dominant over social forces.

In July 1998, Habibie requested the withdrawal of troops. Meanwhile, there was increased activity from the militias. In June, then Governor of East Timor, Albilio Soares, attempted to organise pro-integration/pro-autonomy rallies (with connections with the military) to counter the demonstrations calling for a referendum. Though the military remained hesitant to take direct action against increased protests calling for independence, it was still active in organising counter activity to the pro-independence faction.

Calls for a final solution to the East Timorese conflict continued into the later months. In September, the political parties that originally established themselves prior to the 1975 invasion had set up an umbrella organisation known as the National Council of

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<sup>59</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Soldering on', 18 March 1999, p.28

<sup>60</sup> Taylor, *The Price of Freedom*, p. xvi

Resistance of the People of East Timor (CNRT, *Concelho Nacionale de Resistencia Timorese*) with Xanana as president.<sup>61</sup> The parties had their differences in the past but were willing to overlook these for the sake of unifying the population against Jakarta while taking advantage of the explosive situation.

In October, Governor Soares demanded that all civil servants that refused to support government plans for autonomy would be required to resign from their positions in the civil service. As a response to this demand, thousands of people took to the streets in support of the civil servants and demanded the resignation of the governor himself.<sup>62</sup> Mass protests that continued into the months of November and December paralysed East Timor. In November, East Timorese gathered to commemorate the Santa Cruz massacre which occurred in 1991. In December, streets were blocked and Christmas mass was held in Dili and Baucau.

The situation in East Timor had become simply unmanageable. The initial offer of wide-ranging autonomy was firmly rejected by Bishop Belo and Xanana Gusmao. Social momentum was strong; Habibie and Alatas had no choice but to go further. Jakarta's main challenge was resolving the East Timor problem without setting precedence to other movements in areas such as Aceh and Papua. However, Jakartan elites such as Foreign Minister Ali Alatas have maintained that East Timor was a 'special case' and the solution 'takes into account that it has a different history and different factors that all warrant a special autonomous region...'<sup>63</sup> This point was also

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<sup>61</sup> The East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN), 'East Timor's Flag', <http://www.etan.org/timor/CNRTflag.htm>, accessed 21 August 2003

<sup>62</sup> Kammen, 'The trouble with normal', p. 173

<sup>63</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'A Special Case', 6 August 1998, p. 29



noted by many prominent Indonesian academics.<sup>64</sup> On 27 January 1999, the government announced that it would ask the MPR to 'let East Timor go' if the majority rejected the offer of autonomy.

One of the strongest factors prompting the change in Jakarta's policy towards East Timor was the change of President and the transition. Unlike a few military officers and the Soeharto children, Habibie had no direct personal stake in East Timor. Furthermore, the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (or ICMI) led by Habibie, also questioned Indonesia's persistence in holding on to half an island whose population was predominately Christian.<sup>65</sup> It has been argued by John Taylor that Jakarta's decision to grant East Timor independence came from President Habibie's own quest to distance himself from Soeharto and his own determination to establish himself internationally.<sup>66</sup> Habibie also had another ulterior motive: the upcoming elections in April 1998. Habibie's attempts to settle the conflict would position him as someone serious about democracy and human rights; hence, appealing to the international community while at the same time portraying himself as a reformer to the reformasi bloc. Aides close to the president claim that the one-time technology tsar is taking a personal interest in political reform. 'Habibie wants to be remembered as a president who brought Indonesia out of an authoritarian system and into a democratic era where human rights is a guiding principle', said adviser Dewi Fortuna Anwar.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Arbi Sanit in Jakarta Post, 'Let Timorese decide their own fate', 26 June 1998, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 26 June 2006

<sup>65</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Sudden Impact', 11 February 1999, p. 19

<sup>66</sup> Taylor, *The Price of Freedom*, p. xvii

<sup>67</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Dawn of a New Age', 17 September 1998, p. 25

Habibie's performance as a reformer was mixed. His presidency showed positive steps towards democratisation such as the freedom of speech and competitive elections. However, Habibie has failed to try military officers for human rights abuses and Soeharto for corruption and theft of national wealth which also included his children and cronies not to mention Habibie's own involvement in the Bali Bank scandal<sup>68</sup>. Unfortunately for Habibie, what he has refused to do has undermined the positive steps he has made towards democratisation. Coined as a destroyer of national unity, Habibie's actions have failed to win him votes from the electorate and support from the political elite.<sup>69</sup> He has also been accused of attempting to gain international recognition as a reformer.

Soon, signs began to emerge that Habibie would have to contend with state segments that opposed Habibie's decision which was viewed as potentially destroying the unity of the nation. It did become apparent that only handful of Jakartan elites supported the idea of a referendum or as termed by Jakarta as 'popular consultation'. One of them being the presidential candidate, Amien Rais.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, many other prominent political figures such as Wahid and the military especially the powerful factions were against the idea of an independent East Timor. Megawati also opposed the idea citing what the majority of Indonesians want is 'to see them (East Timor) as part of Indonesia'<sup>71</sup>. Though his opinion did not really matter at this point, Soeharto opposed it.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Several parties have accused Bank Bali of trying to fund former President Habibie's re-election campaign. See Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Habibie Feels the Heat', 9 September 1999, p. 18

<sup>69</sup> Bertand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, p. 181

<sup>70</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Crack in the Wall', 3 September 1998, p. 24

<sup>71</sup> BBC News, 'East Timor's future: what they said', derived from [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), accessed 6 February 2006

<sup>72</sup> Jakarta Post, 'E. Timor settlement: Referendum or autonomy', 18 September 1998, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 18 September 1998

The army was furious and there was discontent amongst parliamentarians and close aides who had not been consulted on the matter. In fact, the President had allegedly thought of the solution during his sleep. He then scribbled it down on a piece of paper and later gave the hand written note to Stapleton Roy, the US Ambassador to Jakarta and declared that he would be making the announcements soon.<sup>73</sup> Both Megawati and Wahid argued that Habibie, as head of a transitional government, had no right to make a decision as such. 'The main thing is that, as of 1 January 2000, we do not want to be burdened with the problem of East Timor any more', Habibie announced in February 1999. Habibie made it no secret of his apathy towards the half island. In the past, Habibie has described the territory as nothing but rocks. He has also gone as far as describing the government's decision to annex East Timor as a humanitarian one. Finance was also an issue for Habibie as he has been quick to note that 93% of East Timor's development budget was funded by the central government.<sup>74</sup>

This has led a few commentators to argue that due to the economic crisis, a continued occupation was no longer financially viable.<sup>75</sup> The lack of funds reached the point where soldiers in East Timor were not being paid. After the rupiah plunged in January 1998, maintaining control over a half an island did not seem as worthwhile as it did in the past. The government has reportedly been spending half of East Timor's \$113 million GDP.<sup>76</sup> East Timor had been putting a strain on Indonesia's financial budget for more than twenty years of its occupation. Funds which could have otherwise been

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<sup>73</sup> Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, p. 434

<sup>74</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Consequences of E. Timor ballot', 5 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 5 September 1999

<sup>75</sup> Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, p.433; Reports in the Sydney Morning Herald also indicate that the lack of funds played a factor in the decision to let East Timor go.

<sup>76</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Sudden Impact', 11 February 1999, p. 19

diverted to fund other government projects. Without the financial crisis crippling the once fast growing economy, Indonesia needed to relieve the financial burden of the operations in East Timor. Once famously described by Ali Alatas as a 'pebble in the shoe'. One academic commented that East Timor has transformed into a 'thorn in our flesh by demanding more money'<sup>77</sup>. However as mentioned earlier, the army had made considerable amounts of money from the province. In these terms, it would not have been a problem if the military had wanted to continue their operations. As the situation would later show, the military did obtain the resources to fund militia groups.

What about other social segments outside East Timor? For most Indonesians, the initial offer of special status was 'more than adequate'<sup>78</sup>. Much debate continued towards the end of 1998 on whether to grant East Timor autonomy or a referendum.<sup>79</sup> The Indonesian nationalist rhetoric amongst the public in 1998 dissipated the view that East Timor should remain the 27<sup>th</sup> province of Indonesia regardless.<sup>80</sup>

What bearing did the situation have on the central hypothesis? There was an upsurge of social forces in East Timor in 1998 protesting against the state and calling for independence. This was made in tandem with nationwide protests though with different demands. The combination of a state in complete disarray, and an economic downturn subsequently transformed state and society relations from a state dominant over society to a society dominant over the state. The state-in-society approach

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<sup>77</sup> Interview with Arbi Sanit in Jakarta Post, 'Let Timorese decide their own fate', 26 June 1998, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 26 June 1998

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Jakarta Post, 'E. Timor settlement: Referendum or autonomy', 18 September 1998, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 18 September 1999

<sup>80</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'Going it alone', 21 January 1999, p. 12

assumes that in situations such as these social forces possess the ability to change the nature of the state itself. This instance confirms the central hypothesis.

However, it is crucial to note that social forces in East Timor alone could not exert pressure on Jakarta which eventually offered East Timor the right to decide its own future. Had the upsurge in social forces in East Timor not been in the context of the multiplicity of problems, there would not have been a change of policy towards East Timor, even though East Timor's independence did not receive support from other social forces. Had the transition not taken place and Soeharto had still been power, the Indonesian state would have had the capability to quell rebellion as it had done so in the past and in many other areas in Indonesia regardless whether there had been an increase in protests in East Timor.

On the international front, the offer of autonomy and later referendum would serve to repair Indonesia's battered image from gross human rights employed by the military as well as enhancing its credibility. The financial crisis has put a toll on Indonesia's resources and pleasing the international community would increase aid from developed countries to overcome the economic crisis.

There is a considerable amount of literature on the international dimension of the conflict on East Timor. Some have been critical of the actions of some governments, which have been perceived to do too little.<sup>81</sup> On the other side of the debate are the foreign dignitaries, ministers and heads of states that have opted for a more defensive

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<sup>81</sup> Joseph Nevins, 'The Making of "Ground Zero" in East Timor in 1999', *Asian Survey*, Vol. XLII, No. 4, July/ August 2002

tone.<sup>82</sup> Though there were increasing criticisms from many states, Australia and Portugal were the two most involved states at this juncture.

Australia was the only western nation to recognise the Indonesian annexation of East Timor in 1976. From 1978, Australia moved from abstaining to supporting the UN resolution against Indonesia's invasion of East Timor to voting against it. By early February, Australia, which originally backed the autonomy package, indicated that it wouldn't mind independence as a 'second best option', though still showing preference for special autonomy.<sup>83</sup> Australia has its reservations towards an independent East Timor. Firstly, maintaining regional security has always been a driving force behind's Australia's foreign policy towards Southeast Asia especially Indonesia which is situated immediately north to Australia's borders. The Agreement on Maintaining Security signed by Indonesia and Australia signed in 1995 illustrates the point. And if East Timor were to gain independence, this may ignite a wave of Balkanisation.<sup>84</sup> Secondly, East Timor's independence does threaten an economic fall out between Indonesia and Australia. Independence will force Australia to re-negotiate the Timor Gap treaty, a deal worth potentially billions of dollars in oil and gas. Though Canberra has significantly shifted their original position on the East Timor question, the public heavily support East Timor's independence. Thirdly, an independent East Timor could be a financial burden to Australia's budget as noted by

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<sup>82</sup> For example, Alexander Downer, 'East Timor-Looking Back on 1999', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, No. 1, 2000

<sup>83</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Australia shifts stance on Timor', 13 January 1999, February 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 4 February 1999

<sup>84</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Australia fears free Timor may fracture RI', 4 February 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 4 February 1999

Prime Minister John Howard, though saying that Australia would still be appropriately generous.<sup>85</sup>

Portugal argued that the East Timorese have not exercised their right to self-determination. This contradicts the Indonesian view that East Timor have exercised this right when they chose to integrate with Indonesia in 1976. Since the upsurge of political activity in East Timor, Portugal and Indonesia have been engaged in talks under the auspices of the UN.

As mentioned earlier, a number of key political figures did not support Habibie's decision. Most importantly, Habibie lacked the support from the military. Though, Wiranto was not among the generals that had great interests in East Timor, his concerns were more about the legitimacy of the armed forces in territory should not be questioned. Consequently, the military had a different view on how to deal with East Timor. A solution that the world would witness and the East Timorese would live through in the months to come. As early as November 1998, these factions within the military had strategies to undermine Habibie's plans for East Timor's future. Senior military figures had launched Operation Clean Sweep (*Operasi Sapu Jagad*) which aimed to get rid of the independence leaders and portray a picture of civil war. Civil war would show that the population was neither anti-integration nor pro-Indonesia, but essentially a region incapable of self-rule. This in turn would show the international community that the province did not have great support for independence as it had set out to have.<sup>86</sup> Unfortunately at the time, many news

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<sup>85</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Australia concerned by East Timor moves', 13 February 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 13 February 1999

<sup>86</sup> Taylor, *Price of Freedom*, p. xx; Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, p. 434

agencies such as CNN and BBC fell into this trap and assisted the military by reiterating this image.<sup>87</sup> And though many were taken by surprise by Habibie's shock decision, the military had at the very least suspected that Habibie would take things a step further. There was an increase in the number of militias in an attempt to prepare for a decision such as this. Three new militia groups were formed during December 1998- January 1999 included *Mahidi* (December 17), *Besi Merah Putih* or Red and White Iron (December 27) and *Aitarak* or Thorn (in early 1999) headed by the much-feared Eurico Guterres.<sup>88</sup>

### *The militias disrupt the state's policies*

The use of militias was nothing new in East Timor or to the wider Indonesian context. The 1965-66 massacre of the members of the PKI mainly in the countryside of Java and Bali were conducted by militias. Though an old practice, there was a sharp increase in the number of militias immediately after Habibie's proposed solution to the conflict in January 1999.<sup>89</sup> Though some reform-minded military officers were willing to accept Habibie's decision, powerful factions were not prepared to release East Timor. The military had invested heavily in East Timor both financially and emotionally. No one had any reason to doubt the links between the Indonesian military and the militias. In March 1999, Kompas had obtained US\$ 2 million to finance the operations.<sup>90</sup> And as early as November 1998, troops and trained militias

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<sup>87</sup> Cristalis, *Bitter Dawn*, p. 149; For example, BBC Online, 'No let-up in Timor violence', 28 August 1999, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), accessed 28 August 2006, BBC Online, 'MP warns of East Timor 'civil war'', 3 September, 1999, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), accessed 3 September 1999; BBC Online, 'Timor unrest: More pictures', 26 August 1999, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), accessed 26 August 1999

<sup>88</sup> Kammen, 'Trouble with the Normal', p. 183

<sup>89</sup> Jakarta Post, 'East Timor mayhem a lesson for TNI', 17 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 17 September 1999

<sup>90</sup> Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, p. 435



prepared itself for Operasi Sapu Jagad. Operations were coordinated under the command structure of pro-autonomy militias (*milisi pro-otonomi*).

The ability of the military to mobilise the population to oppose the state's official action cannot be stressed enough. It had been reported that the military command incorporated an extra 1,000 civilian militias, therefore, adding to the 13,000 military personnel posted in the region. East Timor Military Chief Colonel Tono Suratman deemed the extra recruitment crucial to 'secure East Timor, not to fight (with pro-independence groups). Militias were required to sign a one-year contract and receive a monthly salary of Rp 200,000 equivalent to US\$24.<sup>91</sup> Different sources indicate a higher number of militias operating in the area. Figures that were leaked out from Cilangkap, or the Indonesian Pentagon, indicated an additional 9,000 militia with ties to the Indonesian military suggesting some 21,000 pro-Indonesia military men in the area.<sup>92</sup>

From the months running up to, during and after the referendum, militias were trained and financed by the military. The links between the military and the militias are clear. The police continued to turn a blind eye while the militias embarked on a campaign to terrorise the population into accepting the autonomy package initially offered by Habibie back in January. The International Force for East Timor (or INTERFET which maintained the security situation after the referendum) soldiers accused the military of joining in the looting and burning of buildings.<sup>93</sup> Further evidence of links between the militia and the state were also noted by United Nations Mission in East

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<sup>91</sup> Jakarta Post, '1,000-Strong militia recruited in E. Timor', 8 February 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 8 February 1999

<sup>92</sup> Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, p. 441

<sup>93</sup> 'TNI warns of threat of militia attacks', *Jakarta Post*, 27 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 27 September 1999

Timor (or UNAMET, brought in to manage the popular consultation in East Timor) officials who witnessed meetings where police, military, civil servants and militias were present at blood drinking ceremonies. The white and red flag was posted outside some houses for protection from the militias. Those defiant bore the costs. Civil servants were required to support autonomy and subsequently signed statements reaffirming their word. Refusal to do so resulted in dismissal, suspension or salaries withheld.<sup>94</sup>

The use of militias employed by the military in order to retain control over the territory has been described by Douglas Kammen as an attempt to 'normalise' the territory.<sup>95</sup> This refers to the process of removing military troops and replacing them with militarised civilians. As a result, this would portray a false image that East Timor as governed under an administrative authority like any other province and most importantly not under military rule. The reluctance of some of the Indonesian political elite and some segments within the military to let go of East Timor can be traced back to economic interests in the region. Furthermore, East Timor has been portrayed as a showground for other cases considering independence.<sup>96</sup> The message was clear: any action that will disrupt the unity of the state will be responded with force regardless of any other plans the civilian government may have.

Like other separatist regions such as Aceh and Papua, the military has invested a lot in these regions since the 1975 annexation. As such, it would be difficult to put a complete halt to military operations. Financially, these regions have generated funds

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<sup>94</sup> Martin, *Self-Determination in East Timor*, p. 43

<sup>95</sup> Kammen, 'The trouble with the normal', p. 158

<sup>96</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Australia, RI starting again', 15 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), 15 September 1999

for the under financed military. High-ranking officers based in East Timor have lucrative investments in commodities such as sandalwood, timber, marble, coffee and oil.<sup>97</sup> Soeharto and members of his family also have a stake in the territory. Furthermore, soldiers, that fought and witnessed their comrades die in war, see East Timor as an investment of blood. Wiranto has also been quick to remind the nation that both soldiers and civilians have lost their lives in protecting the integrity of Indonesia.<sup>98</sup> With so many vested interests, Alatas has noted that it had been difficult to come up with plans for autonomy during the Soeharto period that would be 'accepted by several groups'<sup>99</sup>.

The use of militias illustrates the struggles between state segments. On one hand, the state can be viewed as a clearly integrated unit performing its tasks in a unified manner. On the other, the state is fragmented and these state segments are loosely bound together. It is these ill-defined boundaries that often come into conflict with one another or the state's 'official' action. The situation leading up to the referendum and after confirms this assumption. The majority of political elites and the military opposed Habibie's solution to the East Timor question, however, only the military had the means to disrupt the 'state's official action'. This also shows the military's capability to oppose the state's official action is not equal to other state segments which opposed the referendum. This began during the months running up to the referendum when the military aimed to intimidate East Timorese who were voting for independence. The mayhem also aimed to portray an image of a territory incapable of self-rule. After the vote, the militias refused to accept the results by creating violence

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<sup>97</sup> Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, p. 433

<sup>98</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Australia concerned by East Timor moves, 13 February 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 13 February 1999

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Ali Alatas in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 'A Special Case', 6 August 1998, p. 29

as well as setting out demands for East Timor to be partitioned. They also forced mass migration to West Timor.

### ***The Referendum***

'Integration or war. If we lose with 40 percent, it is enough to fight 100 years more'<sup>100</sup>, were the words of Tito Baptista, chairman of the United Front for East Timor Autonomy. The bloodshed following the ballot rang true to his warning. Violence intensified immediately after the announcement of the ballot results at 9 a.m. on 4 September.<sup>101</sup> The first choice of target was UNAMET headquarters in Dili blamed for anything wrong about the present situation. Both the Red Cross and Bishop Belo's residence were not immune to prosecution.<sup>102</sup> Bishop Belo's compound where 5,000 East Timorese were taking refuge even came under attack and was later evacuated by the UN to Darwin, Australia.<sup>103</sup> Buildings set alight had become a common sight as the militias embarked on a spree of looting of what very little the feared East Timorese had left behind. The situation in East Timor had attracted worldwide condemnation. Australia, New Zealand and Canada have all had called for the Security Council to dispatch a peacekeeping force immediately.<sup>104</sup>

Armed pro-integration militias ran amok burning, looting and shooting the population.

Some were lucky enough to escape and seek shelter in the UN complex. A number of

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<sup>100</sup> Tito Baptista quoted in *Jakarta Post*, 'Consequences of the E. Timor ballot', 5 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 5 September 1999; Also BBC Online, 'East Timor's future: what they say', [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), accessed 6 February 2006

<sup>101</sup> *Jakarta Post*, 'E. Timorese reporter tells of his great escape', 19 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 19 September 1999

<sup>102</sup> *Jakarta Post*, 'TNI fortified by West's approach to E. Timor', 20 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 20 September 1999

<sup>103</sup> *Jakarta Post*, 'Belo flees as East Timor sinks deeper into violence', 8 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 8 September 1999

<sup>104</sup> 'Consequences of the E. Timor ballot', *Jakarta Post*, 5 September 1999

East Timorese were forcefully driven to the western side of the island. Pro-Autonomy groups even began suggesting partition if autonomy was rejected.<sup>105</sup> Militias groups also blocked the airport and detained UNAMET personnel for several hours on journey to Dili.<sup>106</sup> They also prevented people from travelling in and out from certain areas such as Manatuto and the outskirts of western Dili. Eurico Gueterres, leader of Aitarak, announced that no political leader was to leave the territory and should be held responsible for the years of conflict in East Timor.<sup>107</sup>

The police were also sympathetic to the pro-integration groups citing that their actions were 'understandable and conducted under police supervision'. As Provincial Police spokesman Capt. Widodo D.S. continued: 'They just want everybody to remain in East Timor so they can share the burden of finding a settlement to their internal matters. But we have persuaded them not to act (excessively)',<sup>108</sup>. Some were reported to have even helped the militias refuel their cars and motorcycles to continue their rampage.<sup>109</sup> There was no armed conflict between the pro-integration and pro-independence groups. It was only the militias firing at will were the words of one journalist. Falintil did not respond to the violence and kept their weapons in designated cantons. Many were disappointed with Frelintil's inaction. Between 5,000 to 6,000 lives bore the cost of Habibie's announcement, a great many others were displaced while some were still being held in paramilitary camps.<sup>110</sup> The terror campaign reflected the army's loss of face over an overwhelming rejection of the

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<sup>105</sup> Martin, *Self-Determination in East Timor*, p. 88

<sup>106</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Consequences of E. Timor ballot', 5 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 5 September 1999

<sup>107</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Armed men patrol streets in Dili', 1 September 1999 [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 1 September 1999

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Jakarta Post, 'E. Timorese reporter tells of his great escape', 19 September 1999 [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 19 September 1999

<sup>110</sup> Taylor, *East Timor The Price of Freedom*, p. xxiv

autonomy package or the army's failure in its role of maintaining the unity of the state.

Indonesia's international standing and reputation suffered dearly from the exposed actions of the military and paramilitary during their occupation of East Timor. Yet despite the reign of terror that East Timorese had been accustomed to for the previous 25 years, the majority of the population no longer feared the repercussions of choosing a future that went against the will of the military. An overwhelming 78 percent of the population had chosen independence. However, little did they know that two weeks later some 330,000 people would have to take refuge in the mountainous areas and a further 150,000 would be forced across the border.<sup>111</sup>

Intimidation did not stop with targeting the local population. The sustained violence intensified in June and worsened in the months running up to the direct ballot. In July, it had been reported that UN staff were evacuated after being threatened by pro-Jakarta forces.<sup>112</sup> Due to this sustained state of chaos caused by the militias, it was no easy task for the UN force which was relatively small in size.<sup>113</sup> The postponement of the referendum twice reflected the challenge of the task and the capability of the military to disrupt the Indonesian state's official policy.

After the attacks on the Red Cross and Bishop Belo's residence, there was increasing pressure to intervene mainly due to mounting concerns expressed by the public in Australia and Portugal but also from high ranking international diplomats and

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid, p. xii

<sup>112</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Proindependence faction set to share power', 3 July 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 3 July 1999

<sup>113</sup> The mission consisted of 241 international staff, 420 volunteers, unarmed police of 280, 50 military liaison officers and 4,000 staff recruited locally. See Taylor, *Price of Freedom*, p. xxii

politicians in the US. On the 6 September, the UN Security Council decided to meet on the matter. A 48-hour ultimatum was set for Indonesia to do something about the security situation. On 10 September, UNAMET departed East Timor leaving many of its local staff behind. By mid September an estimated 150,000 people were being held in paramilitary camps in West Timor which sharply increased to 200,000 by the end of the month. The government gave them just two weeks to decide whether to remain as Indonesian citizens. A great many fled to the mountains.

At this point, Australia announced its plans to lead an international peace keeping force in East Timor committing 2,500 troops on standby and 4,500 for a UN force.<sup>114</sup> Domestic outcry from the images of the militias rampaging through the streets of Dili has prompted the Australian public to back Prime Minister Howard's decision. Later Foreign Minister Alexander Downer also noted that he was unconvinced that the Indonesian military could maintain security within East Timor; therefore, Australia prepared an army to move into East Timor.<sup>115</sup>

As a response, the military imposed martial law on the territory which gave them the legality to manage operations in Timor including militia operations. As such, it came as no surprise that clashes continued between the pro-integration and pro-independence factions.<sup>116</sup> Pressure added for Indonesia to accept an international peacekeeping force with many European and Asian states pledging troops. Australia, New Zealand and Canada all called for the Security Council to dispatch a

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Australia 'not duped' by Jakarta over E. Timor', 25 November 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 25 November 1999

<sup>116</sup> Jakarta Post, 'UN warns Indonesia to halt E. Timor violence', 8 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 8 September 1999

peacekeeping force immediately.<sup>117</sup> With mounting international pressure, the military did not have much of a choice. On 12 September, Habibie finally agreed to a peacekeeping force. On 21 September, the first few troops entered the region. The Indonesian army formally handed over responsibilities to the international peacekeeping force and the number of militias drastically reduced.

After being adamantly against the idea of an international peacekeeping force, what made Indonesia agree to finally admit the force into the territory? Despite calls from Kofi Annan for Ali Alatas to control the situation, the determining factor came from the unity of many states attending the APEC meeting in New Zealand and international organisations to impose sanctions. Alatas and Habibie cancelled their attendance to avoid any uncomfortable questions and remarks that would undoubtedly be raised during the meeting. President Clinton announced that the US had suspended all military sales to, and ties with, Indonesia, consequently, affecting \$100 million worth of military purchases.<sup>118</sup> The IMF also issued successive statements that it was closely watching the situation in East Timor. On 9 September, the IMF announced that it was suspending a planned visit to Indonesia which lending would be decided on.<sup>119</sup> On 11 September, the UK suspended the sales of the Hawk fighter jets to Indonesia and the EU followed suit by announcing its own arms boycott. On the 11 September, the Security Council Mission and Wiranto flew to Dili to assess the situation in East Timor. Ian Martin, Head of UNAMET, noted that Dili was relatively

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<sup>117</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Consequences of the E. Timor ballot', 5 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 5 September 1999

<sup>118</sup> Jakarta Post, 'World ups pressure on Indonesia', 12 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 12 September 1999

<sup>119</sup> Martin, *Self-Determination in East Timor*, p. 108



calm which indicated that the military were orchestrating the violence.<sup>120</sup> Finally on 12 September, Habibie's administration caved in.<sup>121</sup>

The Indonesian government and the armed forces were dumbfounded by the international condemnation of its actions in East Timor. Many Indonesians condemned the Timorese for opting for independence, arguing that they should have been grateful for material and moral support that has been channelled into the territory.<sup>122</sup> It caused several sections of the Indonesian polity to take on an anti-western stance. East Timor is a sensitive issue for Indonesians. For the last 25 years Indonesians have been taught in school that brave Indonesian soldiers liberated the half province from the Portuguese.<sup>123</sup> After two full months of havoc caused by clashes between the militias and pro-independence groups, the MPR agreed to accept the results of the 30 August ballot. Though all factions including the military agreed on the decision, some such as the members of the PDI-P continued to attack Habibie.<sup>124</sup> Unfortunately for Habibie, his plans to portray himself as a reformer had backfired.

The Indonesian government's acceptance of the peacekeeping force has shown how international pressure influenced state effectiveness to act in East Timor. The military had rejected government plans for a referendum as well as a peacekeeping force after the ballot was held in August. During this period, the military revealed a degree of

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid, p. 111

<sup>121</sup> Christian Science Monitor, 'What made Indonesia accept peacekeepers', 14 September 1999, [www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com), accessed 14 September 1999

<sup>122</sup> Jakarta Post, 'TNI fortified by West's approach to E. Timor', 20 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 20 September 1999

<sup>123</sup> Jakarta Post, 'A ripple that became a tsunami', 25 September 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 25 September 1999

<sup>124</sup> Jakarta Post, 'East Timor's independence endorsed', 20 October 1999, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 20 October 1999

autonomy in initiating its own plans for East Timor. Though the military did not directly disrupt the plans, the use of militias served to fulfil the military's plans. I should also add that the military was the only state segment which opposed the referendum and possesses the capability to follow through with its plans.

## Summary of Findings

In many instances, the case of East Timor shows that the Indonesian state's effectiveness in carry out its action was enhanced through support from other social forces in Indonesia as well as support from other states.

Table 5: Summary of Findings in the Case of East Timor

Presidency	Social Forces	State Action	External Forces	The implications
Soeharto	Social forces in Timor demand for independence. However, the Indonesian state achieved high levels of social control over other social forces; thus, enhancing state effectiveness.	Military action to crush rebels.	International support was firmly behind the Indonesian state. In the context of the Cold War, Jakarta gained support from US and Australia to annex East Timor. Portugal wanted a quick departure from the territory.	State action was carried out through mutual empowerment from other social forces. Other states also supported Indonesia's annexation of East Timor.
	Social forces in Timor continue to demand independence. Despite the Dili incident, other social forces are unaware of the situation. The high levels of social control over other social forces meant that the state had more capability to act according to will.	Jakarta opens East Timor. The military opens fire on groups demanding for independence resulting in the Dili incident.	Other states begin to raise the issue of human rights. Jakarta defies international criticisms, closes East Timor and continues its campaign against those demanding for independence.	State action was carried out through mutual empowerment from other social forces. Though pressure from other states increased due to the Dili incident, military and financial assistance continued. As such, the changes at the int'l level did not limit the state effectiveness in maintaining its hold over East Timor.

Table 5: Summary of Findings in the Case of East Timor (continued)

Presidency	Social Forces	State Action	External Forces	The implications
Habibie	Social forces in Timor demand for independence. Other segments of society within Indonesia may sympathise with the abuse that East Timor has endured throughout the years but only as a part of wider protests against the military's dual function. Other segments do not support East Timorese independence.	Autonomy and later the offer of Popular Consultation which could lead to East Timor's independence.	Pressure coming from states that originally backed the annexation of 1975 dramatically change their stance and call for Indonesia to resolve the conflict in East Timor.	Social forces were strong and there was international pressure for Indonesia to resolve the conflict, the multidimensional crises also served to weaken the state, hereby, limiting its capacity.

## **Theoretical Considerations**

The case of East Timor shows the persistent lack of social control which differs from the case of Aceh where social control had fluctuated throughout time. After the annexation of East Timor in 1975 by Indonesian forces, the majority of social forces in East Timor never accepted the legitimacy of Indonesian rule. Levels of participation were also low. However, there was a degree of compliance through coercive means. It was through the mutual empowerment of other social forces outside East Timor and no external involvement that enabled the Indonesian state to remain its control over East Timor until 1999.

What bearings does the case of East Timor have on the state-in-society approach? The international community has definitely played role in the case of East Timor. There is an abundance of examples to show this. Predominantly, former colonies gained their independence post-1945 and many others later in the 1960s. For the case of East Timor, history did not affect how and when it should be decolonised. Left out of the decolonisation process, it was incorporated by Indonesia. Though history did not play a defining role, at the very least it influenced which secessionist movements should gain independence. The case of Aceh will later show that because it lacked a colonial past and therefore an external support, it never received any international support for independence; thus, providing a counterfactual case. Aceh only received substantial international attention only after the tsunami hit the region in 2004.

Rather, international politics of the time, or specifically the Cold War significantly influenced East Timor's political future as opposed to history. As I have mentioned earlier, evidence shows that Indonesia would not have gone ahead with plans to annex East Timor had it not received clear signs of approval from states such as the US and Australia. However once the context of the Cold War was removed, many states began to change their stance towards the East Timor issue. The end of the Cold War also coincided with the Dili incident, which was publicised worldwide, effectively increased awareness which eventually led to action. When the UN began introducing resolutions in 1976, most EU (then EC) countries abstained from voting. However, the EU dramatically changed its stance since the late 1980s. Of course, this had much to do with Portuguese lobbying within the EU as well as the changing context within the international arena.

At the time, the World Bank dubbed Indonesia as an 'Asian Miracle'. Indonesia's position as an emerging market has also influenced other states' support or opposition to Indonesia's role in East Timor. Trade links have influenced some states to ignore the situation in East Timor. However, with the collapse of the economy in 1998, support for East Timorese independence increased. Again, this had much to do with the newfound freedoms of the Indonesian media that reported on the situation. This in turn has increased awareness and support for East Timor amongst the general public such as in Australia; subsequently, pushing its government to intervene in the situation in East Timor. Here, Australia played a role in lobbying for resolution to the conflict. Other states such as the US as well as the EU also pressured Indonesia to accept a peacekeeping force in East Timor after the referendum indicating a significant change of stance from the Cold War years. In sum, the changing

international context with a mixture of international interests influenced external support for or intervention in Indonesia's policies towards managing secessionism in East Timor.

As argued by Buzan, third world states are dependent on the international factors for its own state survival. Indonesia is a deviant case from this approach as external factors cannot be construed as essential to state survival. Though international influence have greatly shaped the way conflict resolution took place in East Timor from 1998 onwards, the relationship between the state and the international can only be defined as external pressure being influential but not a determining factor of Indonesian state's decision-making. The findings in the case of East Timor reinforce this. The 1991 Dili incident exemplifies that Indonesia can defy international criticisms.

While there is ample evidence to show that international politics influenced the state's actions in East Timor, other social forces also had an impact on limiting state capability. The upsurge in social forces in 1998 also coincided with the multiplicity of crises at the time which in turn provided social forces in East Timor with an opportune moment. In the absence of the 1998 crises, the Indonesian state would most likely have possessed the capacity to maintain control of social forces within East Timor.

As Migdal argues states and their societies do not necessarily need to be on opposing ends but can be mutually empowering. As such, social segments can support other social segments to increase their effectiveness by putting forward their demands

towards the state; or social segments could support the state, hereby, increasing state effectiveness. However when demands from one social segment involve breaking away from the state, it is unlikely that any other social segments would support this. Sub-nationalism is a feeling specific to a group of people discontented with the state. Because a sense of nationalism is motivated by a particular group of people, other social groups are unlikely to share any common interests with secessionist groups. Therefore, other social forces and state segments are most likely to support the state's policies that prevent the break-up of the state. Potentially, the policy area of managing secessionism could be an area that is most likely to give clear-cut results because of the predictability of which way social support (other than the secessionist movement) will go: the state or the secessionist movement.

The main actors in the East Timor conflict are the president and the military with the political elites supporting either one of the two. The president has predominantly taken the initiative on the East Timor problem. While some such as ICMI and Amien Rais endorse the president's decision, others such as Megawati and Wahid oppose it. However, the military has taken a step further by disrupting it. The importance of national unity is held dear to the military and it will oppose any governmental plans that threaten or disrupt unity in any way or form.<sup>125</sup> That the TNI instigated violence through the military's backed militia in East Timor after and during the referendum was held illustrates the point. The dynamics between the state segments, especially between the state's official action and the military, stresses the importance of a theory to capture the dynamics and the conflicts of interests within the state. In the case of Indonesia, the military has long had a dominant role in Indonesia's politics and

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<sup>125</sup> Bradford, 'The Indonesian Military as a Professional Organization: Criteria and Ramifications for Reform'



society. As many cases show, attempts to remove the military from politics are very rarely complete.<sup>126</sup> In some cases, the military may opt to increase its assertiveness in policy-making as opposed to when the military was formally in power or in control.<sup>127</sup> In the post-Cold War era, democratically elected governments have become the standard. As such, it is no longer internationally acceptable for a military to take direct control over political processes within a state.<sup>128</sup> The Indonesian military was somewhat aware of this. While discontent with Habibie's initiative and the MPR's decision to let East Timor go, the military opted for the use of proxies as opposed to directly disrupting the referendum itself.

The state-in-society approach has captured the conflict of interests amongst state segments well. The military being a dominant institution in many states especially in Indonesia, deserves more recognition as a dominant actor as opposed to being treated as 'an equal' among other state segments. The military was not the only state segment who opposed Habibie's resolution to the conflict in East Timor. As mentioned earlier, Megawati and Wahid, front-runners in the 1999 elections, both opposed it. The majority of Indonesians did not back the President either. However no political figure or social segment possessed the ability to disrupt or overturn Habibie's decision. Reluctance to do so is a potential explanation. While social forces were more preoccupied in putting forth demands concerning the wider political context, political elites were gearing up for the upcoming elections though some did capitalise on the

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<sup>126</sup> Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckham (eds.), *Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of Military and security establishments in transitional democracies*, (London: Zed, 2003), p. 10; Roger Hamburg, 'Military Withdrawal from Politics', Constantine P. Danopoulos (ed.), *Military Disengagement from Politics*, (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 1

<sup>127</sup> Hamburg, 'Military Withdrawal from Politics', Danopoulos (ed.), *Military Disengagement from Politics*, p. 1

<sup>128</sup> Cawthra and Luckham (eds.), *Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of Military and security establishments in transitional democracies*, p.8-10

population's discontent with Habibie on the East Timor issue. However a more plausible explanation is that in the majority of states, the military is the 'well supplied and most technologically advanced institution'<sup>129</sup>. This is coupled with the matter of the armed forces being the least accountable of all of the segments within the state.<sup>130</sup> Though there have been some attempts to bring military officers guilty of human rights abuses to justice, punishment is minimal and there are plenty of others that still remained unpunished. Consequently, this increased an element of confidence in the military taking on its own initiative and reduced the fear of repercussions.

The military involvement in politics goes back to the national revolution against the Dutch. As such, post-Soeharto governments have to grapple with the challenges of long institutionalised cultures within the military. The most important is the military's continued assertion of its role as the protector of national unity. With the territorial structure still in place, the civilian government effectively encourages this role. This is an on-going legacy that will most likely disrupt the process of reform of the armed forces in the long run and the management of ethnic tensions within Indonesia.

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<sup>129</sup> Hamburg, 'Military Withdrawal from Politics', Danopoulos (ed.), *Military Disengagement from Politics*, p. 2

<sup>130</sup> Cawthra and Luckham (eds.), *Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of Military and security establishments in transitional democracies*, p.15

## **Chapter 5**

### **Aceh**

This chapter explores the characteristics of the Indonesian state's response towards the secessionist movement and its support in Aceh. In the following sections, I will examine the interactions between external forces, social forces and state segments which may either support or oppose the political decisions in managing secessionism in Aceh during the Soeharto and post-Soeharto governments. I will also examine the related claims of the state-in-society approach mentioned in Chapter Two.

In Chapter Three, I explored the relationship between the state and society in three areas: participation, compliance and legitimacy which indicate the levels of social control within Indonesia. Unlike the case of East Timor there has been much more variation in the case of Aceh. The levels of social control exercised by the Indonesian state in Aceh have fluctuated over time. This social control has been challenged at times by Acehnese social forces demanding a separate state. The periodic fluctuation of social control in Aceh means that the three indicators of social control are not used to frame entire chapter. However I return to these indicators in my conclusion. In what follows I will in turn address the issue of resistance against the Indonesian state.

The first section of this chapter will show that a combination of high levels of social control meant that the state had the capacity to deal with the secessionist movement with very little limitations to the state's policy options. Unlike the case of East Timor, I have not placed any particular emphasis on any specific events as I did with the

1975 annexation and the Dili incident which concerned international involvement as Aceh did not attract any international attention during this period.

After the collapse of authoritarian rule, strong social forces did influence the state's decision to concede special autonomy. However, strong social forces were not the only factor which influenced the state. The multidimensional crises the state was facing created an opportune moment for secessionist movements, not only in Aceh, to voice their demands for independence. Integrated domination by the state had now shifted to society. During Megawati's presidency, the multiplicity of crises began to recede; the state had the capability to act on its initiatives. This also coincided with the weakening of social forces in Aceh and other social segments supporting tougher action in managing secessionism in Aceh. Similar assessments can be noted for the policies under SBY's administration. Therefore, the outcome shows that the state more manoeuvrability to manage secessionism.

### **Aceh under the New Order**

The region of Aceh is situated at the most northern tip of Sumatra, Indonesia's most western island. It has an area of 57,365.57 square kilometres. The four million inhabitants are predominately Acehnese. Other groups include the Gayo and the Alas. Though Bahasa Indonesia is widely spoken, the Acehnese language is spoken amongst the Acehnese.

Aceh is known for its fierce resistance against the Dutch from 1873-1903 and then the Japanese during the Second World War. It then joined the Indonesian revolution

against the Dutch after the Second World War. Not long after independence, it began its own struggle against the Indonesian state.

The Acehnese who want independence have constructed history to legitimise their right for independence and de-legitimise Jakarta's rule over its territory. However, in comparison to East Timor as well as Papua, Aceh perhaps has the weakest case. East Timor was a former colony of the Portuguese and was later incorporated into the Republic of Indonesia. Though Papua was part of the former Dutch East Indies, it was decolonised separately from the rest of the archipelago. Furthermore, neither region played a part in the revolution against the Dutch nor did they accept Jakarta's rule when each was incorporated into the Indonesian fold. Though the referendum in East Timor has set a precedent for similar demands from the Acehnese, Indonesian nationalists can easily argue that East Timor was an exception. Because of the manner of how it was incorporated into the Republic of Indonesia and its lack of involvement in the revolution, it has been noted that Indonesians consider East Timor an adopted brother.<sup>1</sup> Likewise a similar argument can be made for Papua, though Indonesian nationalists are unlikely to do so.<sup>2</sup> The same argument cannot be made for Aceh. Unlike East Timor and West Papua where both were forcefully incorporated into Indonesia, Aceh had voluntarily joined the nationalist elite in their struggle against the Dutch and wholeheartedly became a part of the new state.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Barber (ed.), *Aceh: the untold story*, (Bangkok: Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, 2000), p. 61

<sup>2</sup> Aspinal and Berger, 'The break-up of Indonesia? Nationalisms after decolonisation and the limits of the nation-state in post-cold war Southeast Asia', p. 1016

## *Early Opposition against the Indonesian State*

The following sections will show that social forces in Aceh under the New Order were divided between two groups: those supporting the Indonesian government and those demanding a sovereign Aceh. However though support for independence gradually increased over the years, the Indonesian state managed secessionism with very little limitations to its policy options. This was due to mutual empowerment or high levels of social control over social forces in other parts of the archipelago and no inference from other states.

Establishing the starting point of centre-regional relations in Aceh is not as straightforward as in East Timor. Secessionism and a sense of nationalism in East Timor materialized when Indonesia annexed the territory in 1975. In other words, nationalism was a response to what was perceived by the East Timorese as a foreign invasion. A new form of resistance in Aceh only emerged in 1976 more than two decades after the Republic of Indonesia gained its independence. However, the Free Aceh Movement or GAM leaders have always asserted that they have been wrongfully colonised by the Javanese as noted in 'The Redclaration of Independence of Aceh<sup>3</sup>, Sumatra' 4 December 1976:

To the peoples of the world:

We, the people of Aceh, Sumatra, exercising our right of self-determination, and protecting our historic right of eminent

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<sup>3</sup> Hasan Mohammed di Tiro rejected everything Indonesian, hence, used the nineteenth-century English spelling, *Aceheh* as opposed to using *Aceh*. See Siegel, *The Rope of God*, p.336. Other ways in spelling include *Atjeh* which is the Dutch version.

domain to our fatherland, do hereby declare ourselves free and independent from all political control of the foreign regime of Jakarta and the alien people of the island of Java. Our fatherland, Aceh, Sumatra, had always been a free and independent Sovereign State since the world begun....

However, when, after World War II, the Dutch East Indies was supposed to have been liquidated--an empire is not liquidated if its territorial integrity was preserved--our fatherland, Aceh, Sumatra, was not returned to us. Instead, our fatherland was turned over by the Dutch to the Javanese--their mercenaries--by hasty fiat of former colonial powers. The Javanese are alien and foreign people to us Acehnese Sumatrans. We have no historic, political, cultural, economic or geographic relationship with them....<sup>4</sup>

However, the weakness in Acehnese secessionist claims is the historical point where the Acehnese joined the nationalist elites in their struggle for independence against the Dutch, and thereafter, whole heartedly became a part of the new republic. Both sides were united with a common goal of creating a single state formerly known as the Dutch East Indies.<sup>5</sup> Not only did the Acehnese emotionally support the Indonesian revolution, they also supported it financially through revenue from its exports to Malaysia and Singapore.<sup>6</sup> The Acehnese role in the revolution is often emphasised in Indonesian history books. Acehnese resisted the Dutch return, and unlike other parts

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<sup>4</sup> Hasan di Tiro, *The Price of Freedom: The Unfinished Diary of Tengku Hasan di Tiro*, derived from [www.ohiou.edu](http://www.ohiou.edu), accessed 30 August 2003

<sup>5</sup> Bertrand, *Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Indonesia*, p. 165

<sup>6</sup> Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, p. 165; Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, 'Whither Aceh?', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 22 No. 3, p. 439

of the archipelago, it was never retaken. This also created the legitimacy that the former Dutch East Indies had survived a Dutch reoccupation.<sup>7</sup> The Indonesian military also utilises its own version of history to influence the public sentiment. For instance, the military stresses Acehnese heroine Cut Yak Dien's (1848-1908) role as an early Indonesian nationalist who protected the 'Unitary State of Republic of Indonesia'.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, GAM leaders mention little about Aceh's involvement in the revolution. Rather, Hasan di Tiro, founder and leader of GAM, points to a temporary loss of national consciousness that only needs to be reawakened.<sup>9</sup>

Due to the continued resistance against the Dutch, the Acehnese had formed a distinct identity<sup>10</sup> yet at this juncture it was not seen as incompatible with that of the newly constructed Indonesian. Though the Acehnese had a distinct identity, they had voluntarily given up its plans for independence when Sukarno promised autonomy for Aceh. However, relations began to deteriorate thereafter. In order to unite a new state inhabited by 300 groups, nationalist elites including Sukarno sought to build a new nation on the basis of secularism; hence, the third sila which upholds unity in diversity. This created a sense of discontent among the Acehnese, especially the religious leaders (*ulama*), who still had a prominent role in Acehnese society and politics. Furthermore, plans for autonomy never materialised. Soon after independence, Aceh was absorbed into the province of North Sumatra as opposed to being made a province in its own right.

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<sup>7</sup> Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, *The Republican Revolt: A study of the Acehnese Rebellion*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985), p. 30

<sup>8</sup> Indonesian National Military Homepage, 'Dear God... I have betrayed Cut Nyak Dhien's struggles', [www.tni.mil.id/english](http://www.tni.mil.id/english), accessed 23 March 2004

<sup>9</sup> See di Tiro, *The Price of Freedom: The Unfinished Diary of Tengku Hasan di Tiro*

<sup>10</sup> Bertrand, *Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Indonesia*, p. 163



From 1953 to 1965, *Darul Islam*, or the House of Islam movement, broke out in Indonesia in support of a federal Islamic State of Indonesia. In 1953, Daud Beureueh, a well-respected Acehese ulama, led Aceh to join forces with other provinces in Indonesia but 'he did so in the name of Darul Islam of Indonesia, not Darul Islam or Darul Islam Aceh'<sup>11</sup>. In other words, the movement rejected the nature of the state as well as elements of the nation but were not aiming for an outright divorce from the existing state. Hence, at this juncture, it is crucial to make clear that the Acehese still identified themselves as a part of the Indonesian state, as noted in the Manifesto of the Atjeh Rebels (1953):

If we now establish a State, this does not mean we shall be setting up a state within a state, because in our hearts and souls we have always regarded the State of the Republic of Indonesia as but a golden bridge leading to the creation of a state that we have long been yearning.<sup>12</sup>

With the movement gaining increasing support, the central government made Aceh a 'special region' (*daerah istimewa*). These concessions meant granting autonomy in areas of religion, customary law (*adat*) and education. This had pacifying effects on many sections of Acehese society.

GAM premise their claims for a separate state on the grounds that they were wrongly colonised by the Javanese. These claims are undermined by the Acehese involvement and support in the revolution. The Acehese started their bid for an

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<sup>11</sup> Siegel, *The Rope of God*, p. 336

<sup>12</sup> Selections of the Manifesto of the Atjeh Rebels in Clive J. Christie, *A Modern History of Southeast Asia Decolonisation, Nationalism and Separatism*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2000), Appendix 5

independent state in the mid-1970s, hence, Acehnese nationalism was not a response to a foreign invasion as stated in the GAM literature. Discontent erupted a sense of nationalism that was constructed to be incompatible with that of Indonesian identity.

The new movement fundamentally differed from the rebellion in its objective. GAM's aims, as posted on its official website, are 'the survival of their political, social, cultural, and religious heritage which are being destroyed by the Javanese colonialists; the continued existence of their national homeland which is being confiscated and divided among the Javanese...' GAM's ideology is national liberation. GAM leaders, such as Hasan di Tiro, claim that Aceh has been a long-standing independent sovereign state 'for thousands of years' which has been 'recognised internationally'.<sup>13</sup> By this, GAM leaders are referring to the 1817 Treaty of Sumatra assuring Aceh's sovereignty. This ultimately refutes any claims that the Dutch had successfully brought Aceh under colonial rule. In other words, GAM sees its struggles as a continuation of the anti-colonial rebellion in 1873 when the Dutch invaded Aceh. It was later illegally incorporated into the Republic of Indonesia, as noted in its declaration of independence on December 4, 1976: the transfer of sovereignty meant 'by the old Dutch Colonialists to the new, Javanese colonialists'.

Hence, GAM claims its cause is legitimate and not a matter of separatism as branded by the Indonesian government but an issue of decolonisation according to international law.<sup>14</sup> This rhetoric is continuously echoed in GAM literature and in statements by GAM leaders. On the other hand, the Darul Islam rebellion aimed to

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<sup>13</sup> Statement by Tengku Hasan M. di Tiro President of Aceh/Sumatra National Liberation Front before the 44<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, August 3-28 1992, Geneva, Switzerland

<sup>14</sup> See GAM's website, *Aims of the Asnlf*, [www.asnlf.net](http://www.asnlf.net), accessed 19 June 2004

change the status of Islam in the young nation and did not seek to create a separate entity. Most importantly, Darul Islam was not done in the name of the Acehnese but done in the name of Indonesian Islam.

### *The Genesis of the Free Aceh Movement*

Dr. Teungku Hasan Muhammad di Tiro, a prominent businessman and former representative of the Darul Islam rebellion at the United Nations, founded GAM in 1976. Edward Aspinall usefully distinguishes the factors that triggered the conflict and the factors that sustained the conflict.<sup>15</sup> The factors that triggered the conflict were economic and the highly centralised state. The factor that sustained the conflict and generated increased social opposition was violence which will be explored in a later section. Distinguishing the two will not only clarify the issue of support but will also shed light on what brought various sections of social forces in Aceh to support the cause for independence.

One source of discontent was the highly centralised state of the New Order. The earlier Darul Islam movement in the 1950s dissolved when Sukarno promised the territory autonomy. However, soon after Soeharto took over the reigns of power, signs of promised autonomy diminished as the New Order consolidated and became more centralised.

As one of the four richest regions of the archipelago, economic exploitation played a crucial role in igniting a sense of ethnic discontent towards the centre. From being an

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<sup>15</sup> Edward Aspinall, *International Symposium on Peace Building in Aceh: Lessons from Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland*, 16 -18 August 2004, Bangkok

economy with absolutely no significance to becoming one of the fastest growing economies in the archipelago, known as the 'LNG boom', the economic aspect of the conflict cannot be underestimated. In mid-1970s, Jakarta began exploiting Aceh's abundance of natural resources that included oil, natural gas, timber and various other minerals.<sup>16</sup> New Order authorities along with foreign capitalists reaped the benefits. At the same time, decision-making was concentrated amongst the New Order elites.

By the mid-1980s, Aceh's GDP per capita was equal to 282% of the national average becoming an important source of revenue for Jakarta.<sup>17</sup> Not only did the local businessman miss out on Aceh's economic opportunities during this period, there was also a general feeling that revenues which should be rightfully theirs were extracted out of Aceh. As such, a considerable amount of resentment stemmed from the central authorities not spending enough on the region. The situation was made worse due the insensitive attitude of the government officials and military personnel whom often described the locals as 'fanatics' whose culture and world view were in need of modernisation and improvement'<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, the Acehnese also accused the newcomers of corrupting society with gambling, drinking and prostitution and being disrespectful to local customs.

Not all Acehnese lost out on Aceh's booming economy. Social forces in Aceh during this time consisted of two loosely bound categories: those close to the New Order and those who did not benefit from the regime such as di Tiro. Those closely connected to the New Order were known as the technocrats. The technocratic elite in Aceh

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<sup>16</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, 'Rawan *Is as Rawan Does?*: The Origins of Disorder in New Order Aceh' in Andersen, *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*, p. 220

<sup>17</sup> Hal Hill (eds.), *Unity and Diversity: Regional Economic Development in Indonesia since 1970*, (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.6

<sup>18</sup> Robinson, 'Rawan *Is as Rawan Does?* ', p. 222

received their education in Jakarta. Though they were dedicated to Islamic values, they were also committed to the government's development goals. Many of those that associated with the regime included former academic Ibrahim Hassan who became Aceh's governor during the 1980s with the support of Soeharto and rose to prominence as a cabinet minister. Ibrahim Hasan famously requested the increase of troops in Aceh. Soon after the request was made, Aceh was given a DOM status. There was also a web of connections between the decision-makers in Jakarta and those connected with the decision-makers in Jakarta which included foreign capitalists, military and government officials. Patrimonial ties with Jakarta not only ensured access to power but also ensured compliance from these social forces which in turn created legitimacy for the New Order. Some ulama were co-opted by government-sponsored organisations MUI or Golkar which indicated participation.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, those who lacked the links with the elites in Jakarta founded GAM.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, this created a division amongst the Acehnese elites which served to weaken the movement. This differed from the situation in Papua and East Timor where the local elites lacked any links with the New Order. This in turn, created a relatively unified group amongst the supporters of independence in Papua and East Timor.<sup>21</sup>

Initial social support for GAM was marginal. In comparison to the case of East Timor where there was relatively strong opposition to the Indonesian state at the time of the 1975 annexation. There are two explanations for this. Despite having an anti-

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<sup>19</sup> Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, p. 169

<sup>20</sup> Robinson, 'Rawan Is as Rawan Does?'; Shane Barter, *Neither Wolf, nor Lamb: Embracing Civil Society in the Aceh Conflict*, (Bangkok: Asia-Forum, 2004), p. 69

<sup>21</sup> Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, p. 170

corporate tone, the movement for independence was confined to a handful of the Acehese elite which included intellectuals and businessman.<sup>22</sup> It is crucial to note that at the time of GAM's emergence, di Tiro had lost out on bids for oil exploration contracts in Aceh and not all of Acehese elite supported the movement.

### *Increasing Opposition in Aceh and the State's Response*

Though social support was minimal to begin with, it gradually increased throughout the two decades under the New Order. GAM's evolution strength can be charted in two periods. In the initial phase from the birth of GAM in 1976 to 1982, the movement proclaimed independence and attempted to populise its agenda. The second period was from 1989-1992 and will be mentioned in a later section of this chapter. During the first period, both Tim Kell and Eric Eugene Morris argue that the movement lacked an Islamic agenda.<sup>23</sup> As such, the movement failed to attract support from a population with a strong Islamic identity and most importantly the well-respected ulama. Influential ulama Daud Beurueh who led the earlier Darul Islam rebellion initially agreed to back GAM's struggle under the condition the movement was premised on Islam. Di Tiro refused as he believed that having an Islamic agenda would fail to attract outside support. Consequently, Daud Beureueh did not back the movement and called for his followers to do the same. It was still early days and the effects of the centre's economic exploitation had not been widely felt. As such, there was only a small group of disgruntled businessmen that missed out on the LNG boom who supported GAM.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 171

<sup>23</sup> Morris, *Islam and Politics in Aceh: A Study of Centre-Periphery Relations in Indonesia*, p. 300; Kell, *The Roots of Acehese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, p. 65

How did the state respond to the newly established movement? Although GAM had very little social support within Aceh and had few weapons to share amongst themselves and only engaged in sporadic incidents of fighting, the government took no chances. Jakarta immediately sent troops to deal with the situation and with the help of influential leaders involved in the Darul Islam rebellion, word quickly spread amongst the population that GAM was 'the enemy'. The government also began development projects such as new roads and the installation of television stations to contradict GAM claims that the government only sought to exploit Aceh. By 1982, the army crushed the movement to the point where a re-emergence seemed untenable. GAM leaders were either dead, in prison or in-exile. However, a handful of those who managed to escape the heavy-handed tactics of the military fled to Libya where they received ideological and military training as well as financial support.

However, the movement re-emerged and relations between Jakarta and Aceh reached its most intense period from 1989-1992. It has been estimated that 2,000 people were killed in this period.<sup>24</sup> In 1986, hundreds of Acehnese began their training in Libya. Various sources give different indicators which should all be treated with caution. Though exact figures will never be known, it is nevertheless useful to get a rough idea how the movement had grown in this phase. Di Tiro estimates there were 5,000 Libyan graduates during the period of 1986-1989 while GAM leader Malik Mahmud gives a much lower figure of 1,500.<sup>25</sup> The Brussels based International Crisis Group cite 700-800 in comparison to the Indonesian military sources which estimate 583

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<sup>24</sup> Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*, p. 172

<sup>25</sup> Figures obtained during an interview with Hasan di Tiro and Malik Mahmud, cited in Kirsten E. Schulze, *The Free Aceh Movement: Anatomy of a Separatist Organization*, (Washington, DC: East-West Center, Washington, 2004), p. 30

members who were Libyan recruits.<sup>26</sup> These figures only indicate those who were trained in Libya; however, there were also supporters that remained in region. When comparing membership at the initial phase of the movement to this stage, there is no doubt that the movement had grown and was far from defeated.

In 1989, the movement returned better armed and posed a greater challenge to Jakarta. The state responded to social opposition by imposing the notorious DOM under which mass human rights were committed on a wide scale only to crush a relatively small movement. Under DOM, the military had virtually a free hand in controlling Aceh. The region soon became a haven for political and economic gain for the military, not to mention career advancement for the commanders posted there. Support which was initially limited to Acehnese intellectuals and the business community had widened to the other segments of society that suffered under DOM.

Support for GAM was a negative reaction to the army's brutality. It was during this period that the military embarked on a systematic programme to terrorise the Acehnese which included various methods such as public executions, rape, disappearance, detention, 'torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment'<sup>27</sup>. Various other strategies included the cooperation of civilians. For instance and as widely used in East Timor, the 'fence of legs' relied on ordinary Acehnese to advance into areas ahead of the army in order retaliate against rebels that may be preparing for an ambush or to prevent the rebels from attacking the troops. The military also set up night patrols which also used civilians. These nights patrols included groups such as *Unit Ksatria Penegak Pancasila* (Noble Warriors for

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<sup>26</sup> Schulze, *The Free Aceh Movement: Anatomy of a Separatist Organization*, p. 30

<sup>27</sup> Amnesty International, 'INDONESIA New military operations, old patterns of human rights abuses in Aceh (Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, NAD)', [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org), accessed 4 September 2005



Upholding Pancasila) and *Bela Negara* (Defend the State) just to name a few. Members of such units received military training and were armed with basic weaponry such as knives, spears and machetes.<sup>28</sup>

Bringing together a community that suffered common grievances under Jakarta's exploitative rule, the Acehnese sympathised with the movement. In other words, popular support for GAM came from fear and anger of the military's brutality and not necessarily an anti-Jakarta feeling or aspirations for a separate state per se. Though support for the movement had increased and the conflict intensified, the government were quick to reiterate that the problem in Aceh should not be taken as a yardstick to judge Indonesia's stability.<sup>29</sup> Top ranking government officials also stressed that activities of Acehnese rebels were purely criminal and not politically motivated as reiterated by the Acehnese nationalist elites calling for independence.

GAM's capacity had increased attacks on military and police posts within the region. By the mid-1990s, support had expanded and was strong in the areas of Pidie, North Aceh and East Aceh.<sup>30</sup> Like the case of East Timor, Aceh never received support from other social segments within Indonesia throughout the New Order when social control was high. As mentioned in Chapter Three, there was widespread legitimacy for a strong government to maintain the stability of the nation. This was due to the general fears of political chaos experienced during the Sukarno years. Structures in places such as corporatism ensured participation. As such, the Indonesian state had more manoeuvrability to carry out its actions in Aceh due to high levels of social control.

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<sup>28</sup> Robinson, 'Rawan Is as Rawan Does?', p. 230-231

<sup>29</sup> Defense and Security Minister L.B. Moerdani quoted in Jakarta Post, 'Aceh Extremists not politically motivated', 23 June 1990, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 23 June 1990

<sup>30</sup> Sulistiyanto, 'Whither Aceh?', p. 441

Up until 1998, both Aceh and East Timor continued to be ruled as a DOM area where the government 'mounted one of the most heaviest counterinsurgency campaigns seen since the 1960s'<sup>31</sup>. The situation deteriorated and order seemed far from improving. It was believed that over a thousand Acehnese civilians were killed during the first three years alone. The most cautious figures obtained by the provincial government documented 871 dead, 387 missing who were later found dead and 500 disappearances.<sup>32</sup> The number of deaths left 16,375 children orphaned.<sup>33</sup>

This instance shows that state effectiveness was enhanced through mutual empowerment between the Indonesian state and social forces in Indonesia. In comparison to East Timor's Fretilin, Aceh's GAM did not have widespread societal support in its initial period. Social support was low because discontent against the state was only felt by a mere handful. It was only later when the various segments of Acehnese society began to feel the effects of a highly centralised state, economic exploitation but predominantly the brutality of the military that social opposition against the state increased. The expansion of the GAM's support in areas such as Pidie, North and East Aceh are indicators that show that social support had grown. Suppression by the state during the DOM also served to enhance this support. The lack of support from other social forces within Indonesia can be explained by two factors. Firstly, a sense of nationalism is a feeling specific to a particular group. As such, other social segments belonging to other ethnic groups did not support Acehnese independence and were more inclined to support the stability of the state.

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<sup>31</sup> Human Rights Watch, 'Indonesia the War in Aceh', Vol. 13, No. 4, August 2001, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/aceh/>, accessed 15 August 2001 p. 8

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 8

<sup>33</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'An Army in Retreat', 19 November 1998, p. 25

Secondly, the structures of co-optation and repression were in place in other parts of Indonesia. Despite the gradual increase of social support for independence since GAM's inception, there were high levels of social control over other social forces which enhanced the state capability to carry out its actions in managing secessionism in Aceh.

Furthermore, Aceh still lacked the support of the international community. Firstly, the tightly controlled media under Soeharto meant little was heard of the Acehnese movement. As Barber notes the relatively unknown Aceh at the international level also created a perception of weakness and illegitimacy in comparison to East Timor. Secondly, unlike East Timor Aceh was a part of the Dutch East Indies; therefore, it lacked a third state to bring its case to the attention of the international community. For East Timor, there has always been international involvement whether it be positive or negative support for the territory. From the 1975 annexation, the Dili incident to East Timor's successful case of independence was due to its Portugal and Australia which played a role in bringing East Timor's case into the limelight. Aceh's nearest foreign neighbour Malaysia is unlikely to get involved in the conflict. Member states of ASEAN have a tradition of non-intervention in one another's internal affairs. Even closer to the Malays in terms of geography and ethnicity are the Malay-Muslims in Thailand's most southern provinces. Malaysia has only offered to chair talks between the leaders of Bersatu, an umbrella organisation of the five southern movements, and has clearly stated that it will support Thailand's borders.<sup>34</sup> This instance confirms the central hypothesis.

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<sup>34</sup> *Bangkok Post*, 30 April 2003

## **Aceh Post-reformasi**

Soeharto's speech announcing his resignation on 22 May 1998 was a historical moment for all Indonesians. During Soeharto's thirty-two-year-rule, a generation of Indonesians grew up only to know the extreme orderliness of the New Order. The regime had controlled nearly every aspect of the state and its unravelling in effect had unleashed social forces that were dormant under the regime's control. Though the presence of the military still remained there was no doubt that the flowering of society in all parts of the archipelago, including Aceh, was starkly different from the reaction of social forces under the New Order. The upsurge in ethnic violence in many areas in the archipelago and the gathering of students and intellectuals demanding reformasi had ultimately brought down the regime. The chaos and uncertainty brought about political change and rapid democratisation, consequently, a transformation in state-society relations. This section will show that a multiplicity of social demands sapped the strength of the state which consequently led to the Indonesian state conceding to social demands including those in Aceh. Though strong social forces led to concessions, this did not lead to independence due to the lack of support from other states. The rest of the chapter will examine the dynamics behind the state's response under the subsequent presidencies in the post-Soeharto period in managing secessionism in Aceh.

Habibie inherited a multiplicity of problems left behind by the New Order. Unfortunately for Habibie, he lacked popular support. Considering Soeharto as his mentor and having been handpicked by Soeharto himself did not go down well with the public who saw him as a relic of the New Order that had to be removed. Soon

anti-Habibie protests emerged amongst other problems the government had to deal with. Furthermore, the collapse of Soeharto's regime brought freedom to the media which provided a medium for the Acehnese voice to be heard. Stories of horror, abuse and rape conducted by the army became daily headlines. The media which exposed the stories of horror which undermined the state's most important part in its machinery in bringing ethnic discontent under control: the army.<sup>35</sup>

The Indonesian media, which had long been suppressed throughout Soeharto's 32-year-rule, showed footage of the massacres and continuously reported on human rights abuses. This immediately raised public awareness amongst both the Acehnese and non-Acehnese. Some social forces protested against the government in support of the victims of human rights in Aceh. However, this was only done as part of wider protests against the government and the military's dual function. Furthermore, protests did not necessarily translate into support amongst non-Acehnese Indonesians for Aceh's aspirations for independence. Support only went as far as bringing the perpetrators of human rights violations to justice.<sup>36</sup>

### ***The Upsurge in Social Forces in Aceh***

In line with the reformasi euphoria experienced throughout the archipelago, during April and early August 1998, social forces in Aceh boldly demanded the notorious DOM status to be removed from the region. Delegations from Aceh left for Jakarta with endless stories of abuse, and evidence of abuse, during the DOM period. Several NGOs were established with the aim of documenting human rights abuses in Aceh.

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<sup>35</sup> Sulistiyanto, 'Whither Aceh?', p. 443

<sup>36</sup> Barber (ed.), *Aceh: the untold story*, p. 61

Similarly, Komnas-HAM was assigned to investigate these stories of abuses and the DPR, Indonesia's national parliament founded fact-finding missions. As interest in the region heightened, Indonesian NGOs and journalists both foreign and Indonesian flocked to the region.

The human rights abuses committed by the military in Aceh resulted in an upsurge of support for Acehnese independence. However, social forces within Aceh were divided by the means of achieving an independent state. On one hand, GAM and its supporters mainly from poor rural areas that suffered greatly under DOM supported a violent struggle against the Indonesian military. On the other, student groups and their supporters believed that Acehnese independence could be achieved through democratic processes such as a referendum. The student group consisted of student organisations, NGOs and religious based organisations such as *thaliban* (muslim students) and *ulama dayah* (religious teachers) who were all former student activists that had studied abroad or in Java during the 1970s and 1980s. This group became the main thrust of the reformasi movement.<sup>37</sup> Other groups such as MUI that were formerly co-opted by the New Order also joined the student movement. This group was directly influenced by the referendum held in East Timor.

While there was an upsurge in groups demanding for independence, there were a number of NGOs that emerged which were more focused on human rights and social issues as opposed to having a political agenda. Lastly, there were also the social forces co-opted by the New Order such as the technocrats and business elite in Aceh which formed a relatively small group at the time. It was the three former categories

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<sup>37</sup> Sulistiyanto, 'Whither Aceh?', p. 444

that formed the social forces which played a significant role in mobilising against the state. Social momentum was great and there were hopes that independence was within reach as reflected in popularised slogan of the time: *sebatang rokok lagi* or only a cigarette away.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the most illustrative example was the annual rallies held by the Acehnese in protest of the government. By late 1999, the central government had very little authority in the territory. This can be seen from the 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of GAM (4 December 1999) which attracted widespread support. In GAM strongholds, local governments were hardly functioning. Student groups such as Student Solidarity for the People (SMUR) along with Aceh Referendum Information Center (SIRA) successfully organised protests which attracted widespread support. In November 1999, an estimated 500,000 to two million people took to the streets in support of SIRA goals in a peaceful demonstration.<sup>39</sup> Though some sources give a lower number while others claim support was much higher, there is no doubt that there was a substantial support for independence. A year later, similar efforts were made to organise the same rally. While the previous crowds were much larger, the security forces had felt the need to prevent the rally which enjoyed overwhelming support of the population.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Edward Aspinall, *The Helsinki Agreement: A More Promising Basis for Peace in Aceh?* (Washington DC: East-West Center, 2005), p. 9

<sup>39</sup> Human Rights Watch estimate 500,000 see Human Rights Watch, 'Indonesia the War in Aceh', p. 10; two million is estimated by Lilianne Fan Coordinator of Student Coalition for Aceh see 'Crisis in Aceh Threatens Indonesian Unity', *Tapol*, 28 November 1999, [www.tapol.org](http://www.tapol.org), accessed 17 August 2005

<sup>40</sup> For details see 'Tens of thousands rally for peace in Aceh', *Tapol Bulletin Online* 160, December 2000, accessed 23 January 2003

As social forces gathered momentum in Aceh, in other areas as well as in Jakarta began calling for Habibie's resignation and for democratic elections to be held. At the same time, political opponents of Habibie began to engineer his removal. The loss of East Timor had a profound effect on the mindset of the Jakartan elites who felt that the threat of disintegration was real and Aceh might gain the international support East Timor had.<sup>41</sup> It was under these circumstances that the Indonesian elites felt the issue needed its most urgent attention.

Though Jakarta had no inclination to allow Aceh to choose its future via referendum as in East Timor, the disoriented political elites and military had no choice but to ride the waves of change.<sup>42</sup> This was an extreme opposite to Soeharto's rule. As such, the conflict cannot be viewed in isolation from the nature of the transition. The government caved in to demands for reformasi. Concessions were made to secessionist groups. Like the case of East Timor, social forces in Aceh had increased capacity to put forward its demands to the state. Concessions indicate the weakening of social control. These concessions included the offer of an asymmetrical autonomous status to the region.

I use the term concessions, as the new policies were a significant departure from the brutal response towards secessionism used during the New Order where the concept of unitary state was placed above over diversity. Secondly, the implementation of asymmetrical autonomy had profound effects on Indonesian nationalism and democracy. Decentralising not only meant that power was devolving from Jakarta to

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with Chief Negotiator for the Republic of Indonesia, Wiryono Sastrohandoyo, Jakarta, 24 June 2005

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Chief Negotiator for the Republic of Indonesia, Wiryono Sastrohandoyo, Jakarta, 24 June 2005



the regions but also from the central bureaucracy to the parliament.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, it also indicated that Jakarta was acknowledging that Papua and Aceh were special cases that differed from other regions in Indonesia.

This begs the question: what implications do the two different policies towards managing secessionism in East Timor and Aceh have on the state-in-society approach? Though the upsurge in social activity in East Timor and Aceh occurred in the same context of reformasi, the Indonesian state felt it was more justified in offering East Timor a choice on its political future due to its history. This is in contrast with the case of Aceh where the nationalist elite wholeheartedly joined the Republic of Indonesia in its revolution against the Dutch. However, the state-in-society approach does not make assumptions about human behaviour or decision-making. Rather, the approach is more focussed on the coalitions between state segments and social forces which can potentially disrupt the state's official action. Thus, the difference in the state's responses towards East Timor and Aceh does not negate the approach in any way.

Among the many concessions made, President Habibie made a visit to apologise to the Acehnese.<sup>44</sup> Defense Minister and TNI Commander-in-Chief General Wiranto also made a public apology for the brutality of the army during the infamous DOM operations. He almost immediately agreed to put an end to the eight-year status and withdrawal of 1,000 troops.<sup>45</sup> Acehnese-in-exile including those involved in criminal activities would not be prosecuted and would be allowed to return to Aceh. Other

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<sup>43</sup> Rodd McGibbon, *Secessionist challenges in Aceh and Papua: is special autonomy the solution?* (Washington DC: East-West Center, 2004), p. 22

<sup>44</sup> Edward Aspinall and Harold Crouch, *The Aceh peace process: why it failed*, (Washington, DC: East-West Center Washington, 2003), p. 6

<sup>45</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review, 'An Army in Retreat', 19 November 1998, p. 24

promises were made, including bringing the perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice, scholarships for orphaned children and a plan to boost the economy. The Habibie administration also authorised an independent body to investigate various allegations of human rights abuses in Aceh.

The Habibie administration that granted amnesty to Acehnese prisoners and those-in-exile had contributed to the strengthening of, and rapid growth in, GAM. Supporters of GAM, in hiding both in the region and abroad reappeared in populated areas of Aceh.<sup>46</sup> Those that were abroad had received ideological and military training. Quickly, they began to spread the word and popularise GAM's cause for independence. The relatively open environment, in comparison to political and media controls during the New Order, made it easier to do so.

By mid-1999 it seemed as if GAM was better organised than before and its influence began to spread to areas where support was originally weak.<sup>47</sup> And for the time being, GAM enjoyed widespread support from various segments of Acehnese society. The movement continued to grow and expand into the rest of Aceh. One observer notes that GAM membership increased five-fold since its inception, and successfully controlled 70-80 per cent of the region including the institution of local government.<sup>48</sup> As many have suggested, the ideals of separatism became the dominant discourse in post-Soeharto Aceh.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Sulistiyanto, 'Whither Aceh?', p. 444

<sup>47</sup> Aspinall and Crouch, *The Aceh peace process: why it failed*, p. 6

<sup>48</sup> Schulze, *The Free Aceh Movement (GAM): Anatomy of a Separatist Movement*, p. viii

<sup>49</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Aceh: Can Autonomy Stem the Conflict?' Asia Report No. 18, 27 June 2001, [www.crisisweb.org](http://www.crisisweb.org), accessed 20 July 2004, p. 2; Anthony L. Smith, 'Aceh: Democratic Times, Authoritarian Solutions', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (December, 2002), p. 83; Also based on discussions with the Acehnese themselves, journalists and academics who were in the region during this period.

Support for independence became so intense that in certain areas the Indonesian government at the village and subdistrict levels was practically non-functioning. This literally means that state officials have abandoned their administrative posts or have come to 'an arrangement' with GAM. In traditional GAM strongholds: Pidie, North and East Aceh, an International Crisis Group report suggested that Acehnese institutions are replacing the state structure and institutions.<sup>50</sup> One example would be the revival of the *tuhapeut*, a group of four village elders that take responsibility of managing and leading discussions on village affairs. Whilst facilitating and monitoring the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) Major General Tanongsak Tuvunun, Chairman of the Joint Security Committee (JSC), noted how the crowds would follow GAM leaders around while shouting "*Medeka*" (independence) in the presence of the TNI.<sup>51</sup> Academics and journalists who have been to the region have also noted similar incidents.<sup>52</sup> It is impossible to know how much support there was for independence unless a secret ballot had taken place. However, the rallies held in 1999 and 2000 in protest against the government, the expansion of the GAM's strongholds and the increase in GAM's membership all indicated an upsurge in social forces and a stronger movement.

International involvement is crucial to both sides. International pressure would weaken the government's position resulting in concessions to secessionist demands such as bringing those suspected of human rights abuses to justice or devolving more power to the region. International pressure could go as far as altering the boundaries

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<sup>50</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Aceh: Can Autonomy Stem the Conflict?', p. 13

<sup>51</sup> Major General Tanongsuk Tuvunin, *148 Days in Aceh A Diary during the Implementation Process of Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) between the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement*, (Bangkok: Peace Operations Divisions, 2002), p. 15

<sup>52</sup> Smith, 'Aceh: Democratic Times, Authoritarian Solutions', p. 83-84

of the state as has been done in the East Timor case. On the other hand, the international community could turn a blind eye or exert nominal pressure on Jakarta's policies in handling secessionism, consequently, posing fewer limitations to decision-making in Aceh.

Timing of the re-emergence of GAM was unfortunate for their cause for independence. Though domestic and foreign media and NGOs began publicising the Acehese tragedy, much attention was diverted to East Timor. Indonesian's Southeast Asian neighbours are unlikely to interfere with Indonesia's internal considering Asean's long tradition of non-intervention. Recent developments have reconfirmed ASEAN member's apathetic stance.

During this period, social forces in Aceh can be loosely categorised into four groups. First, those connected with the former regime, Second, NGOs campaigning for human rights. Third, student groups that supported Acehese independence through democratic means. Fourth, GAM and its supporters that demanded Acehese independence through an armed conflict. The latter three categories formed an opposition against the Indonesia state. The state responded to these demands from social forces in Aceh by granting a number of concessions. An upsurge of social forces in Aceh was also made in tandem with wider protests calling for *reformasi*. Other crises such as the financial crisis and inter-ethnic violence together created multi-dimensional problems for an already disoriented state. Though society has achieved integrated domination over the state, social forces within Indonesia did not support Aceh's claims for independence. With no support from other social forces and

external forces, Aceh still remained part of the Indonesian state. This instance confirms the central hypothesis.

Had there been an absence of these pending challenges, the state would probably have had the capability to manage secessionism in Aceh. Social discontent had always existed but was controlled by the military and the previous strong state under the New Order. As such, had there not been a multiplicity of challenges, the structures to maintain social forces were still in place. Furthermore, history strongly indicates that the state has managed to control regional rebellion in Aceh and East Timor for more than three decades.

I have also noted that both East Timor and Aceh called for independence during this period; however, the Indonesian state offered the chance for the East Timorese to choose their political future via referendum. The state-in-society approach does not make any assumptions about decision-making; thus, accounts for differences in the state's response towards managing East Timor and Aceh. The flexibility in the approach this gives it more manoeuvrability to explain a variety of situations.

### **Under Wahid's Presidency: the Humanitarian Pause**

Like the circumstances under Habibie, Wahid was operating in the context of low levels of social control. The Indonesian state was dealing with a multiplicity of demands from social forces. Unlike the case of East Timor which had the support of many states for its bid for independence, Aceh had none. It was a combination of low levels of social control that limited the state's policy options. However, due to the

lack of international support for Aceh which meant that independence would not be achieved.

While the autonomy package was being discussed, President Abdurraman Wahid popularly known as Gus Dur, also initiated peace talks to resolve the conflict in Aceh. However, Wahid's decision-making took place in the similar context as Habibie- the state was still reeling from the crises post-Soeharto. And if it were not for these timely circumstances, the peace talks would not have taken place. Firstly, the military was still recovering from its wounded reputation following revelations of mass human rights violations especially those committed in East Timor and Aceh. This barred the government or the military from taking a military approach. The Foreign Minister, Hassan Wirajuda in his discussion with Hasan di Tiro, also acknowledged this point.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, GAM also had little hope of defeating the army. Secondly, social forces in Aceh had emboldened. GAM's reawakening and the emergence of softliners such as Muslim student groups, Islamic school students and Islamic school teachers also indicated that the government was losing its control over policy making in Aceh. Thirdly, the domestic domain began pressurising the government to bring those guilty of gross human rights abuses to justice.<sup>54</sup> Lastly, the elections had brought Abdurraman Wahid to power. The combination of the four factors above indicated that the state was in no position to defy social forces.

Wahid was known as a reformist and was deeply suspicious of the military. However, Wahid was also generally known for his conflicting statements and erratic behaviour. As Ulil Abshar-Abdakka, head of the Human Resources Research and Development

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<sup>53</sup> Aspinall and Crouch, *The Aceh peace process: why it failed*, p. 11

<sup>54</sup> Sulistiyanto, 'Whither Aceh?', p. 446

Department of NU notes that, 'Gus Dur, who is famous for his unpredictability and penchant for political zig-zagging and is difficult to understand, is like what he was when he led the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) for 15 years'<sup>55</sup>. A clear example of this was when Wahid founded his own think-tank Democracy Forum in 1991 and together with pro-democracy activists, he boldly criticised the government on various fronts. However, by the 1997 elections, Wahid had abandoned his democratic ideals, supported Golkar together with Soeharto's eldest daughter, Siti Hardiyanti (Tutut) Rukmana and became a member of the handpicked MPR, Indonesia's highest state institution whose responsibilities included amending the constitution and re-electing Soeharto.<sup>56</sup> It was a combination of these rare circumstances that enabled Wahid to initiate peace talks with GAM. In January, Wahid made an agreement with the Geneva based Henri Dunant Center (HDC) to mediate the talks between Jakarta and GAM. After several talks, the agreement for a Humanitarian Pause between GAM and the Indonesian government was signed on 12 May 2000. The agreement received widespread support in Aceh as thousands held mass prayers for a successful process indicating strong social support.<sup>57</sup>

There was no doubt that a bumpy road laid ahead for the mediators. Firstly, both sides were adamant about their objectives. On one hand, GAM insisted that it would not settle for anything less than independence. On the other, political elites in Jakarta asserted that any agreement could only be based on the unitary state of Indonesia. There was also insistence that the offer of autonomy was the starting point of

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, 'Gus Dur: tale of a great survivor', Harry Baskara (ed.), *Questioning Gus Dur*, (Jakarta: The Jakarta Post, 2000), p. 18

<sup>56</sup> O'Rourke, *Reformasi The Struggle for Power in Post-Soeharto Indonesia*, p. 20-21

<sup>57</sup> Online Interview with NGO worker based in Aceh, 23 May 2000

negotiations.<sup>58</sup> However, the costs of participating in the peace deal seemed low enough for both sides to take the risk.<sup>59</sup> What changed from the early reformasi period was that sympathy for the Acehnese from the parliament began to wane. No major political party supported the president's initiatives in Aceh and the army was especially opposed to the potential destruction of national unity.

Disunity amongst social forces in Aceh posed additional problems. There was increasing doubts to the extent GAM leaders in exile had control over the GAM fighters in Aceh, despite assertion by GAM fighters that Hasan di Tiro was their leader. Unlike East Timor's movement for independence, there was no clear leadership. The East Timorese looked up to Xanana Gusmao for political leadership while turning to Bishop Belo for religious leadership. GAM has had the longest and most prominent role in advancing Acehnese aspirations for independence. However, as the political leaders are in exile in Sweden, there was a lack of accessibility and contact with Acehnese social forces. GAM's dissident faction in Malaysia added further complications. As a result, social support for independence was not unified. As mentioned earlier, other sections of Acehnese society had been increasingly involved in supporting the call for independence through democratic means. Student movements play prominent roles in lobbying international organisations such as the UN, investigating human rights abuses, providing refuge and humanitarian aid for displaced people.<sup>60</sup> As a result, student movements have gained respect and credibility but still have limitations to their political capacity.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with Chief Negotiator for the Republic of Indonesia, Wiryono Sastrohandoyo, Jakarta, 24 June 2005

<sup>59</sup> Konrad Huber, *The HDC in Aceh: promises and pitfalls of NGO mediation and implementation*, (East-West Center Washington, 2004), p. 18

<sup>60</sup> Barber (ed.), *Aceh: the untold story*, p. 63

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 64



Despite the factions in GAM and the multiplicity of other groups demanding independence, peace talks went ahead with the political leadership in Sweden. Though the Acehnese had little confidence in Jakarta's promises, participating in negotiations that were mediated by an international organisation seemed like a good opportunity for GAM to internationalise the conflict. Peace talks would strengthen the legitimacy of the government-in-exile in Sweden in the eyes of the Acehnese which they hoped would unify the territory in the struggle for independence.

How did other state segments view the peace negotiations? Apart from Wahid and a few of his ministers, peace talks received a cool reception in Jakarta. Some such as House Speaker Akbar Tanjung criticised the government for upgrading the status of GAM by inviting an international host to mediate the talks. There was little doubt that the military opposed the talks, however, it was in no position to stop the process. At the time, gaining the support from the military seemed relatively inconsequential due to its battered image. On the other hand, failure to gain the military's backing would later cause disruptions and collapse in 2001 and again in 2003 (during Megawati's presidency). Though talks went ahead, clashes on the ground continued. On the international level, talks were praised and supported by the UN, US and EU countries. Both the US and Norwegian governments provided the funding.<sup>62</sup>

Though Wahid was a key advocate for reconciliation with the Acehnese, the unfolding impeachment case, which began in the first half of 2001, overshadowed the peace process. Wahid was also known for his conflicting statements, clumsy attempts

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<sup>62</sup> Barter, *Neither Wolf nor Lamb*, p. 15

to initiate democratic reform and erratic behaviour which Indonesians witnessed during the final months of his presidency. Towards the end of his tenancy, there was increasing opposition to his ill-judged policies at the same time he also managed to alienate his allies. As the presidential crisis unfolded, Wahid lost control of his government as it became increasingly disunited. As a result, this provided the space for security forces to take more coercive measures.<sup>63</sup>

In March 2001, the DPR threw its support behind security operations in the region. On 11 April, faced with a greater crisis on his hands, President Wahid formalised security operations by signing a Presidential Instruction (Inpres 4/2001) on Comprehensive Measures to Resolve the Aceh Problem which aimed to resolve the conflict by addressing six areas of concern: political, economic, social, legal and public order, security, and information. The period thereafter saw a complete breakdown of security. Subsequently, the peace process came to an end.

To a large extent, Wahid was working in the same circumstance as Habibie. There were strong social forces not only in Aceh but in other parts of the archipelago other social forces were putting their demands to the state. Furthermore, the state had to deal with other challenges such as the financial crisis. As such, low levels of social control limited the state's policy options which resulted in the state having to make concessions to social forces in Aceh. This instance confirms the central hypothesis.

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<sup>63</sup> McGibbon, *Secessionist Challenges in Aceh and Papua: Is Special Autonomy the Solution?* p. 40; Aguswandi, Civil Society: The Missing Piece in Peace Building in Aceh in Annelies Heijmans, Nicola Simmonds, and Hans van de Veen (eds.), *Searching for Peace in Asia Pacific: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2004), p. 387

As in the case of East Timor, the military opposed the concessions made to Aceh. However in the case of Aceh, the military did not go as far as disrupting the state's official action as it had done in East Timor after the Habibie's administration announcement of popular consultation. This was because the situation had not pushed the military to take drastic measures as it had done in East Timor. Furthermore, the connection with the militia and attacks after the referendum in East Timor had done much damage to its image.

### **Megawati takes over**

At this juncture, social demands and calls for reform had receded. State and society relations were classified as dispersed domination where neither the state nor society achieved domination over the other. Though the state did not enjoy high levels of social control as it did during the New Order, the combination of social support for tougher action and the changing international context gave the Indonesian state more manoeuvrability to take military action in Aceh.

By the time Megawati took over the presidency, there was a considerable change of attitude in the MPR towards the conflict in Aceh. At the time of Soeharto's downfall, the media reporting on mass human violations in conflict areas had mustered sympathy for the people in conflict areas including Aceh. However by 2001, there was a change of heart. Jakarta had become increasingly impatient with the permissive attitude and began to lobby for more coercive means that gradually led to the imposition of martial law in 2003.

Megawati had once vowed never to let another drop of blood spill in Aceh after her party, the PDI-P, won an overwhelming victory in the 1999 elections.<sup>64</sup> Reiterating this stance in January 2001, she announced the government had 'every intention' to resolve the conflict in Aceh. However upon seceding Wahid, she announced six national goals placing national integrity above all in her acceptance speech. It is also widely known that she perceives herself as the true guardian of her father's legacy, or Pancasila which he had authored. In regard to the government policies imposed on Aceh, one senior official had noted that Megawati had acted as 'Bung Karno's daughter rather than a president'.<sup>65</sup> Such nationalistic views only brought her closer to the military than her predecessor.<sup>66</sup> Inpres 4/2001 (presidential instruction signed by former President Wahid giving the military a mandate to carry out military operations) was still in place and other state sectors seemed eager to send in more troops.

On 11 October 2001, Megawati continued the presidential instruction by issuing Inpres No. 7/2001 citing that there had been 'no sign of resolution through peaceful means'.<sup>67</sup> The new minister for Home Affairs, Lieutenant General (ret.) Hari Triyono, though stating that the military was following the government's policy, also announced that the military was ready to send in more troops and a third of the

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<sup>64</sup> 'If one day Cut Nyak lead this country, I will not let even a drop of people's blood to fall to Aceh's ground, which has given so much to making Indonesia independent. To you I pledge my love', stated Megawati in her victory speech on 29 July 1999 after the PDI-P won the 1999 general elections.

<sup>65</sup> Confidential interview with Indonesian Official, Jakarta, 15 June 2005

<sup>66</sup> Rizal Sukma, 'Secessionist Challenge in Aceh Problems and Prospects', Hadi Soesastro, Anthony L. Smith and Han Mui Ling (eds.), *Governance in Indonesia Challenges Facing the Megawati Presidency*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), p. 175

<sup>67</sup> Jakarta Post, 'No compromise with the Free Aceh Movement', 8 February 2002, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 8 February 2002

marines. Likewise, Kompasus was only waiting for a request for reinforcements from the military.<sup>68</sup>

From the previous two presidencies, evidence shows that both Habibie and Wahid were still dealing with the multiplicity of challenges which in turn limited the state's policy options. Concessions were granted to appease social forces in Aceh. What enabled the state to take on more assertive stance on managing secessionism in Aceh? Tough action had much to do with Wahid's removal from office in July 2001. Wahid was known as the architect of accommodation and the key advocate for negotiations and conciliation. However, Wahid had miscalculated several of his political decisions that alienated his allies. There was growing opposition to his presidency and by early 2001 Wahid sought to assuage the military by taking a tougher approach to separatism, which resulted in the signing of Inpres 4/2001. As the military took control of the situation, social momentum in Aceh was neutralised and political space once enjoyed during the period immediately after the downfall of Soeharto came to an end.

Because of Megawati's nationalistic views, the change of the presidency emboldened the military. Lieutenant Ryamizard Ryacudu expressed: 'for two years we [the military] have been pushed around all the time and have not been able to move. It is as if our feet are tied but GAM's are not and our men are slaughtered and killed...In any country these who are terrorists or armed insurgents will be eliminated. How can

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<sup>68</sup> Maj. General Amirul Isnareni interviewed in Jakarta Post, 'Kompasus readied to quell Aceh rebels', 17 April 2001, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 17 April 2001

we make peace with them? Two offers of peace are enough... How can we negotiate a thousand times?’<sup>69</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Acehnese social forces demanding independence lacked support from other social forces outside of Aceh. The wider movement for reform in Indonesia included demands the trial of those guilty of human rights abuses in areas such as East Timor and Aceh which suffered greatly under the military’s operations. However, this did not necessarily translate into support for Acehnese independence.

Another important factor that tipped the balance in favour of the state was the changing international environment post 9/11. Governments were placing a great deal of importance on state security. The government sought to take advantage of the changing context by labelling GAM as a terrorist organisation. This also led Jakarta to add pressure on the Swedish government to prosecute GAM leaders whom had taken up Swedish citizenship and were living in exile in Sweden. The international environment also opened up opportunities for the Indonesian military to become a partner in tackling terrorism, which it hoped would repair the bad image, created from the East Timor saga. Here, the constellation of weak social forces in Aceh, a lack of social support from other areas within Indonesia for Aceh’s independence and the state’s increased ability to manage its resources in turn increased the state’s effectiveness to carry out its actions. However, support from external forces to take tougher action against secessionism in the light of the 9/11 attacks gave more manoeuvrability to the Indonesian state to take military action against the Acehnese rebels in the name of the war against terror.

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<sup>69</sup> Aspinall and Crouch, *The Aceh peace process: why it failed*, p. 24

However, the reconsolidation of state authority also had much to do with enhanced state effectiveness in managing the pending economic and political crises. At this juncture, the crises that the country was facing had receded which in turn strengthened the state and broadened the state's policy options. Regional rebellion in other areas such as Riau had been pacified. There was greater macroeconomic stability and inflation had been brought under control. Elections had been held in 1999 which addressed the wider demand for democratic reform since the fall of Soeharto.

### ***Peace Talks and Military Action***

State response towards managing secessionism in Aceh involved peace talks and military action. This reflected two views within the state on how to manage the conflict. On one hand, there were a few such as Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono who advocated peace talks. On the other, there were others such as the military, the PDI-P that favoured military action. The government also made unilateral concessions for special autonomy which was key to dealing with the conflict. Habibie first proposed the offer of autonomy in 1999. The DPR was required to adopt laws on special autonomy for Aceh and West Papua by 1 May 2001. Though the DPR did not meet the deadline, the Special Autonomy Law on Nanggroe Aceh Darulsalam (NAD) was only passed on 19 July, a few days before Wahid's disgraced downfall. The law was only signed by his successor on 9 August.

As for the peace talks, various international bodies such as the HDC and a few foreign governments continued efforts to revive the faltered peace process. However,

international involvement was not as great as in East Timor. Evidence of international support for the peace talks was shown in 2001 when the team of 'wise men' was formed by HDC which consisted of former foreign diplomats<sup>70</sup>. However, it was not until Megawati gave the go ahead when the wise men were allowed to take part in the peace process under the condition that they acted solely as mediators and not on the behalf of their countries. As such, international involvement in the conflict was the encouragement for the two sides to engage in peace talks as opposed to exerting pressure as had been the case of East Timor which in turn limited the Indonesian state capabilities.

Several foreign dignitaries from the US and the EU made trips to Aceh throughout 2001 and 2002 in attempt to bring the two sides to the negotiating table. Such endeavour was not completely hopeless as the secretariat at the Kuala Tripa Hotel in Aceh and the monitoring teams were still in tact indicating that the government had not entirely turned its back on the option of resolving the conflict through peaceful means.

Talks started in February 2002 but it was only in May when the meeting between the two sides amounted to an agreement that GAM would accept the NAD law as a starting point for negotiations. However, though some progress had been made at the negotiation table, fighting on the ground continued. State segments especially the TNI did not attempt to hide their opposition to the peace process. TNI Chief Endriartono

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<sup>70</sup> The wise men included retired US Marine General Anthony Zinni; former Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan; Yugoslav ambassador to Jakarta, Budimir Loncar; later they were joined by former Swedish diplomat, Bengt Soderberg and Lord Eric Avebury who was not a wise man but worked along with the group.



Sutarto believed that 'separatist groups such as GAM should be seen as an enemy so that the TNI can carry out its duties without any fear of allegations of human rights violations'<sup>71</sup>. As fighting persisted, talks did not produce any favourable results to justify its continuation. It was not long until other state segments opposed the peace talks. The DPR grew increasingly impatient and called for intensified military operations to replace the negotiations that were going nowhere.<sup>72</sup> Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, then Coordinating Minister for Political and Social Affairs and advocator of talks, expressed his reluctance and impatience in continuing with negotiations: 'Any separatist movement must be crushed, and we have the international support to maintain our national territorial integrity'....'Should the dialog continue to proceed in an uncertain manner, while there isn't a sincere indication from GAM to find a peaceful solution to the Aceh question, the government might later decide to stop the dialog'<sup>73</sup>. As the pressure from the hardliners to take tougher action against GAM mounted, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono finally gave the go ahead for military operations, citing that 'the heightened security situation in Aceh has recently forced us to consider whether we can continue with civil authority there'<sup>74</sup>.

Peace talks coincided with the government's move to step up on security aimed to pressurise GAM into coming back to the negotiation table. Susilo gave GAM an ultimatum to accept negotiations within the framework of special autonomy before the end of Ramadan (6 December). If GAM refused these conditions, the government

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with TNI Chief Endriartono Sutarto in Jakarta Post, 'House backs moves to use force against separatist movements', 25 June 2002, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 25 June 2002

<sup>72</sup> Jakarta Post, 'House backs moves to use force against separatist movements', 25 June 2002 [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 25 June 2002

<sup>73</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Military to get new mandate to crush GAM', 8 February 2002, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 8 February 2002

<sup>74</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Government mulls military crackdown against separatist movement in Aceh', 4 July 2002, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 4 July 2002

would take 'tough and appropriate' measures. This shows that the state had strengthened considerably.<sup>75</sup>

On the other hand, external forces continued to support a peaceful resolution but not independence. This support did not amount to pressure. As such, international involvement was not as strong as it was in the case of East Timor post-1998. Japan, US, EU and the World Bank cosponsored a Preparatory Meeting on Peace and Reconstruction in Aceh which pledged humanitarian programmes and rehabilitation under the condition that an agreement between Jakarta and GAM had been signed.<sup>76</sup> Australia and Canada promised funds to support the monitoring of the peace agreement while Norway, Sweden and the US continued their support for the HDC.<sup>77</sup>

Because those who advocated peace talks were a minority within the government, those who advocated a military approach, which also included the president, dominated the decision-making process. There had been much talk amongst the Jakartan elites, especially the military, about reviving the Aceh military command, known as *Iskandar Muda Military Command*. With several military victories including the killing of GAM military commander Abdullah Syafi'ie, the hardliners felt justified in continuing with military options. Indeed, the military command was reinstated in tandem with the peace talks in Geneva. Consequently, the establishment of the military command would only make the military presence a more permanent feature in Aceh which would also confer the military with the legal mandate to crush the rebellion. On the other hand, the reestablishment of the military command was

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid

<sup>76</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Japan, US initiate meeting to rebuild shattered Aceh', 21 November 2002, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 21 November 2002

<sup>77</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Western leaders hail Aceh truce, promise aid', 11 December 2002, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 11 December 2002

met with opposition amongst the majority of the Acehnese with the exception of the local elite.<sup>78</sup>

Not long after the signing of COHA, both sides began accusing one another of violating the agreement. Those within the state who opposed the peace talks began accusing GAM of holding public rallies and disseminating propaganda supporting a separate state of Aceh. Jakarta also accused GAM of reconsolidating itself by various means including rebuilding its government structure which functioned like any local government<sup>79</sup>, recruiting new members, accumulating new weapons and collecting tax from the public or what the government terms as extortion.<sup>80</sup> It was feared that GAM was expanding its influence into new areas. Government sources admitted that local government in some areas were even under GAM's control. Consequently, Jakarta took action by tightening controls on society. The government began arresting a number of human rights activists including Muhammad Nazar, chairman of the SIRA for spreading sedition against the government.<sup>81</sup>

At this juncture, social opposition continued and GAM was still reluctant to start the disarmament process in fear that the Indonesian military was preparing for new military operations. It was not long before negative statements began appearing in the press which threatened negotiations. SBY stated 'Indonesians love peace, but Indonesians value their sovereignty and territorial integrity even more'<sup>82</sup>, which

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<sup>78</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Does Aceh need a military command?' 11 January 2002, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 11 January 2002

<sup>79</sup> For example, GAM issued marriage certificates.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Chief Negotiator for the Republic of Indonesia, Wiryono Sastrohandoyo, Jakarta, 24 June 2005

<sup>81</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Aceh's peace agreement stronger than RI law', 7 April 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 7 April 2003

<sup>82</sup> Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono quoted in Jakarta Post, 'Peace versus sovereignty', 29 April 2002, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 29 April 2002

clearly indicated a pretext for a military campaign. Tensions rose between the military and GAM as clashes between the two sides became frequent. The JSC office in Aceh had been attacked. This led many observers to believe that the military, which at that juncture was clearly against the peace process, had been behind the incidents in an attempt derail the whole process.<sup>83</sup>

As tensions rose, Jakarta prepared for other security options. In one last ditch to save the faltering peace process, the HDC backed by the US, EU, Japan and the World Bank brought the two sides together for talks in Tokyo on 17 May.<sup>84</sup> However at the time, preparations for military action were well advanced to the point the army was unlikely to pull back. An Indonesian official said between 40,000 to 50,000 troops were preparing for security operations. Softliners that advocated resolving the conflict were growing impatient with GAM and at this juncture had very little reason to believe that GAM was sincere in resolving the conflict through peaceful means. Many such as the chief negotiator, Wiryo Sastrohandoyo, now believed that GAM only accepted negotiations for the purposes of consolidating its forces and to resume fighting when it mustered enough strength.<sup>85</sup>

Violence from both sides stepped up which ultimately discredited any attempts to resolve the conflict through the peace agreement. The domestic situation post-Bali bombings, which occurred on 12 October 2002, tilted in favour of a firm approach. On 19 May 2003, martial law was imposed on the region for six months and extended

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<sup>83</sup> Discussions at 'Reconstruction and Peace Building in Aceh', August 2005, conference held in Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>84</sup> Unlike the peace talks facilitated by the HDC in December 2002, the Japanese government hosted the talks held in Tokyo.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Wiryo Sastrohandoyo in Jakarta Post, 'The Aceh Conflict: the Long and Bumpy Road to Peace', 7 May 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 7 May 2003

again in November for an additional six months. Many have attributed Megawati's ascendancy to power to her father's legacy, and who, it is observed by her harsh critics, to shy away from the media, had gained increasing popularity for this move. The implementation of martial law immediately suspended the implementation of autonomy. The government's decision to implement martial law was facilitated by the September 11 attacks and the subsequent attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq. Though there were calls from external forces such as the UN and Australia<sup>86</sup> to lift martial law the pressure was not great, as post-9/11 created an environment where state security was prioritised. Furthermore, these faint calls had little effect on Jakarta as western nations that backed the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq lacked any form of credibility to stop Jakarta from sending in its own troops in its own territory.<sup>87</sup>

According to opinion polls, the public supported Megawati's tough stance on separatism. COHA revived a nationalistic sentiment amongst the public which was also fanned by the military and the political elite statements which indicated that separatism posed a grave threat to the integrity of the nation if not dealt with effectively. Consequently, strong popular sentiment surfaced against GAM. The imposition of marital law ultimately meant the suspension of autonomy and the military possessing absolute powers in the region.

Though there were calls from external forces such as the UN and Australia<sup>88</sup> to lift martial law pressure was not great as post-9/11 created an environment where state security was prioritised. There has also been a subsequent call for the resumption of

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<sup>86</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Int'l community decries war in Aceh and calls for peace', 21 June 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 21 June 2003

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Chief Negotiator of Republic of Indonesia, Wiryono Sastrohandoyo, Jakarta, 24 June 2005

<sup>88</sup> 'Int'l community decries war in Aceh and calls for peace', *Jakarta Post*, 21 June 2003

peace negotiations. However, Indonesians generally view western governments as adopting double standards. With the war on Iraq, Indonesians feel that western governments have been unfair to tell Indonesia to avoid war in their very own territory especially when this war means the unity of the nation.<sup>89</sup> This point was also reiterated by the Chief Negotiator for the Republic of Indonesia, Wiryono Sastrohandoyo.<sup>90</sup>

Suggestions from a lecturer at the University of Indonesia to take legal action against the Swedish government to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for harbouring citizens of Acehnese descent, who are involved in GAM, have subsequently turned into a government campaign. The Acehnese residing in Sweden include GAM's government in exile as well as the movement's founder, Hasan di Tiro.<sup>91</sup>

There have also been changes since the 1999 euphoria of reformasi where most social forces were mobilising against the Indonesian state. The waning momentum of civil protests in Aceh coincided with Wahid's departure and the Indonesian state's tendency to implement military action in Aceh. Mass gatherings that had occurred on the same scale as in 1999 and 2000 did not materialise in 2001 which signified the weakening of social forces. The military action continued and was formalised under martial law. Political freedoms once enjoyed had been curtailed. The media were also

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<sup>89</sup> Jakarta Post, 'No Indonesia without Aceh', 22 May 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 22 May 2003

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Chief Negotiator for the Republic of Indonesia, Wiryono Sastrohandoyo, Jakarta, 24 June 2005

<sup>91</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Demanding Swedish action over GAM is a wasted effort', 21 May 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 21 May 2003

required to report on the achievements of the military and publish pieces on Indonesian national unity.<sup>92</sup>

Divisions surfaced amongst social forces in Aceh that had previously formed a united bloc against the Indonesian state during the reformasi period. Some social forces in Aceh that opposed Acehnese independence and aligned themselves with the Indonesian state begun to emerge. For example, there was an upsurge in militia activity since late 2002 to early 2003 which the military deny any involvement.<sup>93</sup> There had also been reports that community leaders had been rallying farmers, civil servants and militia groups that had pledged loyalty to the Indonesian state in a ceremony before the military commander which was the biggest pro-government since the imposition of Martial Law. Predominantly, this group consisted of Acehnese who disliked GAM because the movement had been involved in taxing the people. However, evidence also seemed to suggest the Acehnese that had joined militia groups and rallies against GAM were co-opted or forced to do so for fear of being accused a GAM sympathiser.<sup>94</sup>

### ***Under martial law 2003: the suppression of social forces in Aceh***

Under martial law, the government had complete control over its policies in Aceh independent of social forces. Public opinion in Indonesia was tilting in favour of the government's tough actions against GAM. Under this status, the authority of the

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<sup>92</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Aceh war sparks a culture of fear within the media industry', 18 June 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 18 June 2003; Also Jakarta Post, 'Free speech on Aceh curtailed', 19 June 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 19 June 2003

<sup>93</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Concerns heightens about militia groups in Aceh', 21 April 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 21 April 2003

<sup>94</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Farmers, civil servants, youths, militia rally against Aceh rebels', 27 June 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 27 June 2003

administration was transferred and became subordinate to the military as the Martial Law Administrator.

The Aceh military rulers brought a number of controls to the region. Just barely two days into martial law, Aceh military ruler Major General Endang Surwarya, placed restrictions over the media, printing facilities, postal services and telecommunications. The media was specifically instructed not to print statements from GAM.<sup>95</sup> 'I want all news published to uphold the spirit of nationalism. Put the interests of the unitary state of Indonesia first. Don't give statements from GAM any credence as they are made without facts and evidence'<sup>96</sup>. Instead, a selected group of journalists were embedded within Indonesian troops to report on the situation. Consequently, it was during this period that media reports were more focussed on military successes as well as mass rallies held in support and loyalty to Republic of Indonesia or more specifically the unitary state, otherwise known by the Indonesian acronym of NKRI.<sup>97</sup> These rallies were held almost everyday for Acehnese to repent their disloyalty to Jakarta, pledge their support for the state ideology Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, sing the national anthem and other patriotic songs as well as fly the Indonesian flag. In no time, as Rodd McGibbon notes: 'The notion of NKRI became increasingly popular public formation in public discourse both in Jakarta and Aceh and came to function in much the way as pancasila had done during the New Order- as the key construct of state nationalism'<sup>98</sup>. However, there were also reports that

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<sup>95</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Victims of War', 23 May 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 23 May 2003

<sup>96</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Truth becomes causality of war as military restricts media', 22 May 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 23 May 2003

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Dhandy Dwi Laksono, Chief Editor of Aceh Kita, Jakarta, 11 July 2004

<sup>98</sup> McGibbon, *Secessionist Challenges in Aceh and Papua: Is Special Autonomy the Solution?*, p. 52. Italics in original text.



villagers were forced to attend these functions. Other rallies that were initiated by civil movements were banned during this period.

Secondly, the government continued its initiative (since negotiations began) to arrest many prominent human rights activists and several other Acehnese for their alleged involvement or support for GAM. In addition, several NGOs were also accused of being GAM sympathisers. For the military, GAM includes the separatist armed wing fighting for independence and also those who adopt political and peaceful means in voicing their demands to Jakarta such as students, human rights activist and NGO workers.<sup>99</sup> Authorities under martial law had the power to detain suspects for 20 days without trial which could be extended for another 50 days.

Thirdly, the Indonesian government imposed restrictions on foreigners entering Aceh including NGO workers.<sup>100</sup> The UN, which remained, had its activities restricted to Banda Aceh. The government also required that the Acehnese working for the administration undergo special screening known as *Litsus* (short for *penlitian khusus*) which was originally used during the Soeharto era to root out the communists. This time round, the purpose for the reintroduction of *Litsus* was to wipe out all GAM elements within the local bureaucracy.<sup>101</sup> All Acehnese were also required to apply for new identity cards while the Acehnese living outside the region were living under surveillance.

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<sup>99</sup> Jakarta Post, 'The role of intelligence and counterinsurgency', 28 May 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 28 May 2003

<sup>100</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Foreigners barred from entering Aceh: Minister', 12 June 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 12 June 2003

<sup>101</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Alienating the Acehnese', 16 June 2003, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 16 June 2003

Fourth, like the case of East Timor, civilian militias were established to support the military's activities and provide intelligence.<sup>102</sup> In all, the power the military enjoyed under the martial law was not much different from the powers it had once enjoyed under Soeharto. Here, state authority over social forces in Aceh was at its height.

TNI spokesman claimed that a year of martial law had been imposed; GAM's strength had been reduced to 40%.<sup>103</sup> TNI claimed to have killed 1,300 GAM members while 2,000 surrendered. Some 1,200 alleged GAM members reportedly attended reeducation camps where they were required to swear their allegiance to the Indonesian state, learn about Pancasila, and sing the national anthem as well as other patriotic songs.<sup>104</sup> The local administration had been reinstated at both the regency and district levels. Schools had also been reopened. Due to the mass crackdown on GAM members and the fear of being suspected of supporting GAM, support for independence had subsided.<sup>105</sup> Though the situation had improved and the military seemed to have gained control over the territory, the movement still existed which kept the military on guard.

During this period, the Indonesian state initiated two policies to deal with secessionism in Aceh: talks mediated by the HDC and military action. The main supporter of peace talks was Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. However, he also advocated 'an integrated approach' which required a mixture of negotiations as well as military action. The military, undoubtedly, supported a more hard line approach in

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<sup>102</sup> Edward Aspinall, *The Helsinki Agreement: A More Promising Basis for Peace in Aceh?* (Washington DC: East-West Center, 2006), p. 8

<sup>103</sup> Jakarta Post, 'TNI devises new strategy for Aceh under new status', 22 May 2004, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 22 May 2004

<sup>104</sup> Jakarta Post, 'TNI reeducation for more alleged GAM members', 12 April 2004, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com), accessed 12 April 2004

<sup>105</sup> Discussion with NGO worker, Bangkok, 2 September 2005

managing the conflict. This can be seen from its support of reinstating the military command in Aceh making the military presence a more permanent feature. The state's 'integrated approach' also involved the state promising concessions or benefits if GAM conceded to the state's proposals. However, the stick approach or military action was also applied when GAM refused. What social forces in Aceh wanted had very little impact on decision-making. Consequently, both military action and talks were done independent of social forces in Aceh. Opposition from social forces in Aceh and within other parts of the archipelago had subsided since the reformasi period. This gave the Indonesian state precedence over policy making and to carry out its actions. The strengthening of the state also had much to do with the Megawati administration's attempt to tackle the Indonesian state's pending problems such as the weak economy and unemployment levels. The state-in-society approach also assumes that the state's increased ability to control social forces in Aceh could be explained through the state's ability to manage resources. Though international involvement encouraged and mediated peace talks but did not create a substantial amount of pressure which was experienced in East Timor during the referendum. On the contrary, the changing international context gave the state more manoeuvrability to carry out military action. This instance confirms the central hypothesis.

### **President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono**

While a military offensive continued, the political changes at the national level ushered a new chapter in managing secessionism in Aceh. The presidential elections held in September 2004 brought victory to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Jusuf Kalla. Though in the past Susilo had demonstrated he was committed to peace

negotiations, he also supported military action to eliminate GAM. Kalla was the main drive in the government to resolve the conflict in Aceh through democratic means; however, the devastation caused by Indian Ocean tsunami of 26 December interrupted talks.

At the time of writing, the two sides have agreed on several key issues that have resulted in the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). There was more optimism of the MoU succeeding in comparison to the previous agreements such as the Humanitarian Pause in 2000 which was followed by COHA in 2002. This was due to several factors. The authority of the third party or the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) consisting of the EU and ASEAN, is greater than the previous body, the JSC, during COHA.<sup>106</sup> In addition to issues discussed in the preceding negotiations, the latest round of talks has touched on the idea of having local political parties and the need to reintegrate former GAM members into society. As such, the new agreement provides more incentives and benefits for GAM. However, were the new incentives enough to entice GAM to come back to the negotiating table?

Many media reports suggested that the Boxing Day tsunami was the determining factor that brought the two sides back to the negotiating table.<sup>107</sup> While the human catastrophe prompted the two sides to rethink their positions and re-open negotiations, steps to resurrect negotiations had started before the tsunami occurred. The post-tsunami context provided both sides to push for peace talks especially for those in the government supporting a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The context enabled SBY

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<sup>106</sup> Monitoring mechanisms are more formalised, both the Indonesian government and GAM are not allowed to veto decisions and decisions made by the AMM are binding to both parties. For more details see Aspinall, *The Helsinki Agreement: A More Promising Basis for Peace in Aceh?* p. 46

<sup>107</sup> For example, see BBC Online, 'Aceh rebels sign peace agreement', 15 August 2005, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), accessed 15 August 2005

and Kalla to present the talks as a humanitarian response to the Boxing Day tsunami as opposed to a concession.<sup>108</sup> As a result, both sides would not lose face. Both the military and GAM agreed to suspend hostilities to allow humanitarian aid to reach the territory devastated by the tsunami. The TNI also were reassigned to assist with relief efforts. International interest was renewed in promoting a peaceful resolution to the conflict.<sup>109</sup> Not long after the tsunami had interrupted the flow of negotiations, GAM publicly announced hope that negotiations could continue. Jusuf Kalla responded positively to GAM calls.

Though there was a transformation of state policies from military action to peace talks, this did not coincide with the weakening of the state or the strengthening of social forces. On the contrary, martial law, which was followed by civil emergency status, reduced GAM's capacity in combat. A number of senior figures within GAM had been captured or killed. With the military gaining ground, GAM fighters were deeply demoralised. However, the reduction of GAM members did not necessarily translate into an increase of Acehnese social support for the Indonesian state. The past shows that the military's brutality has in turn alienated and encouraged the Acehnese to sympathise with GAM. As mentioned in the previous section, under martial law the military had full reign over the territory; consequently, limiting any opposition from non-armed social forces. Civil liberties such as freedom of the press were considerably restricted. Rallies were organised for the Acehnese to pledge their loyalty to the Indonesian state and Pancasila. As such, the reduction in social support for independence was under the state's control as opposed to having a change of heart. Because GAM needed the population for its guerrilla warfare this ultimately

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<sup>108</sup> Aspinall, *The Helsinki Agreement: A More Promising Basis for Peace in Aceh?* p. 21

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p. 20

deprived GAM of its crucial supply of food, supplies and intelligence.<sup>110</sup> The situation within Aceh worsened and optimism of achieving independence, once ran high during 1999-2000 at the time of the civil protests against the government, was now wavering.<sup>111</sup> With a combination of the factors above, social forces that supported independence within in Aceh had considerably weakened.

Not only did GAM experience a loss in personnel and morale, international attention for the conflict had also waned during the martial law period. As mentioned earlier, international concern for the conflict Aceh never matched the attention that East Timor received. International interest in East Timor went as far as supporting the territory's independence. On the other hand, international involvement in Aceh only went as far as mediating peace negotiations in 2000-3 and vanished soon after. Since the collapse of the 2003 talks and subsequent imposition of martial law and civil emergency, the conflict has received very little international attention. Because GAM has always craved international attention, receiving none of it at this point pushed the movement to consider other options. As a result, this strengthened the Indonesian state's position in negotiations and with GAM making several concessions.

An important factor in bringing the negotiations back on the table was the change in leadership at the national level. We have seen from the administrations under Habibie and Wahid, the Indonesian state still did not have much of a choice as it was still reeling from the multiplicity of problems it was facing at the time. When Megawati took over, the crises the state was facing began to recede. It was during this period when the state segments such as the military, which favoured military action, began to

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<sup>110</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Aceh: A New Chance for Peace?', Asia Briefing No. 40, 15 August 2005, [www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org), accessed 15 August 2005, p. 4

<sup>111</sup> Aspinall, *The Helsinki Agreement: A More Promising Basis for Peace in Aceh?* p. 9

take precedence over policy making in Aceh. The strengthening of forces within the government to resolve the conflict through peace negotiations came when Susilo and Kalla were elevated to top positions within the state. As such, the transformation of the state's policies towards managing secessionism in Aceh had nothing to do with changes in state effectiveness.

Though Kalla had a personal interest in reviving a peace deal with the Acehnese, the initiative was not without opposition from segments of the political elite. Staunchly-opposed to anything disrupting national unity, the PDI-P continued to endorse the use of military force as a solution to the conflict. However, not only was there a change at the leadership level, the wider population which formerly supported a military approach in resolving the conflict now deemed such measures politically incorrect.<sup>112</sup> Here, some segments within Indonesia and a few states began calling for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Despite opposition from segments of the political elite, Kalla continued efforts with support from segments of the population. Both Wahid and Megawati needed the military for their political survival. In comparison, SBY-Kalla defied any opposition to and was more prepared to defend their policies. This was due to Kalla's relatively strong position within the Indonesian polity.<sup>113</sup> First of all, the SBY-Kalla government has more control over the military. Secondly, Kalla is also a chairperson of Golkar, the leading party of the 2004 legislative elections. Furthermore, Kalla has also built up good relations with major Islamic groups. Consequently, as Rizal Sukma argues: 'These political assets enabled the government to pursue peace talks with GAM, and

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<sup>112</sup> Rizal Sukma, 'Indonesia and the tsunami: responses and foreign policy implications', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 2, p. 219

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, p. 219-220

helped it to pull together significant support for the peace deal from the DPR, the TNI, and Islamic groups, especially when it had to ward off opposition to deal with some retired generals and PDI-P'<sup>114</sup>.

More specifically, the shift from military action to peace talks had much to do with Kalla. Though SBY was also open to negotiations under the previous administration, he never entirely ruled out the option of a military offensive. SBY formerly adopted the 'integrated approach' where military action was used to eliminate GAM but also considered other measures such as humanitarian aid to ease past grievances. Kalla's interest in resolving the conflict in Aceh through negotiations started when he served as a minister in Megawati's cabinet. It was during this period that he also mediated talks between Christian and Muslim groups in Maluku and Poso, Sulawesi which resulted in the signing of the Malino Accords.<sup>115</sup>

New initiatives from a new administration were not the only ingredient for the peace negotiations. Peace negotiations during Wahid and Megawati were disrupted by the military. As such, the success of negotiations is also dependent on the civil-military relations. Though SBY was a retired general who developed a reputation as a reformist, he did not make any further attempts to reform the armed forces. Instead, he devoted much attention to sidelining the conservative generals such as General Ryamizard Ryacudu who was one of the staunchest critics of the Aceh peace process in 2003. Consequently, there was no significant disruption to the peace plans in Aceh from the military. In addition, SBY also allocated a further 526 billion rupiah package

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 220

<sup>115</sup> USINDO Open Forum with Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare, Jusuf Kalla in Washington, DC, 22 July 2003, [www.usindo.org](http://www.usindo.org), accessed 22 July 2003



to the military. This in turn convinced the military that the peace deal was economically advantageous to them.<sup>116</sup>

The renewed peace talks, which resulted in the signing of the MoU, confirm the central hypothesis. The 2004 Presidential elections brought about a change in leadership which also brought a new perspective in dealing with the conflict in Aceh. Vice President Kalla pushed forward the new approach. At the same time, social momentum in Aceh had dramatically reduced due to tight controls under martial law. Furthermore, the military offensive inflicted losses on GAM which resulted in a loss of morale. This is a stark contrast in comparison to the optimism during the period immediately after Soeharto's downfall. The tsunami renewed international interest in the region; however, this did not go as far as supporting Aceh's independence. Social forces in other areas of Indonesia that formerly supported a military approach to the conflict in Aceh viewed such measures as politically incorrect. As such, there was increasing support for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. However, this did not mean that there was support for independence.

The more social control, the more manoeuvrability the state has to carry out its actions. With the support from other social forces to resolve the conflict through peaceful means, the crises of 1998 finally subsided and no international support for Aceh's sovereignty, this enabled the state to carry out its initiatives with very little opposition to its policies. This instance confirms the central hypothesis.

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<sup>116</sup> Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism, and Institutional Resistance*, p. 51

## Summary of Findings

The findings of the case of Aceh are summarised in the table below:

Table 6: Summary of Findings in the Case of Aceh

Presidency	Social Forces	State Action	External Forces	The implications
Soeharto	Social forces in Timor demand for independence. However, the Indonesian state achieved high levels of social control over other social forces; thus, enhancing state effectiveness.	Military action to crush rebels which was later formalised under DOM.	Unlike East Timor, little was known about Aceh. As such, no international opposition to the state's policies in Aceh can be translated into international support for the Indonesian state.	State action was carried out without any substantial opposition from society or any other external force in turn enhancing state effectiveness to act.
Habibie	Social forces in Aceh demand for independence. Other segments of society within Indonesia may sympathise with the abuse that Aceh has endured throughout the years but only as a part of wider protests against the military's dual function. Other segments do not support Aceh's independence.	Offer of Special Autonomy.	No international involvement.	Social forces were strong and there was no international pressure for Indonesia to resolve the conflict. The state's diminished ability to manage resources also served to weakened its position.
Wahid	Civil protests continued in Aceh. Other social segments within Indonesia did not support Aceh's calls for independence.	Special autonomy and peace talks or the Humanitarian Pause.	No international involvement.	The circumstances had not changed since Habibie's presidency.

Table 6: Summary of Findings in the Case of Aceh (continued)

Presidency	Social Forces	State Action	External Forces	The implications
Wahid	Waning momentum of social forces in Aceh. No support from other segments within Indonesia.	Inpres 4/2001 resulting in military action. Presidential crisis overshadowed the peace process and Jakartan elites were becoming increasingly impatient.	No international involvement.	The state was still in disarray from presidential crisis; however, the state had the capability to assert itself through mutual empowerment.
Megawati	1) Waning social momentum since the immediate period after Soeharto's downfall. No support from other social segments. 2) Protests against the re-establishment of the military command. No positive support from other social segments.	1) Peace talks or COHA. 2) The re-establishment of the military command in Aceh.	1) Relatively new and unknown HDC mediates peace talks. 2) The war on terror gives the state more manoeuvrability to carry out military action.	Waning momentum from social forces both in Aceh and within Indonesia increased the state's manoeuvrability to carry out its actions. Outside support provided the state the opportunity to implement martial law.
	Protests within Aceh against the implementation of martial law. Other social segments support the state's decision.	Martial law. Pushed forward by the military and supported by those who initially supported peace talks.	HDC's role as a mediating talks ends. Aceh returns to international obscurity.	State effectiveness enhanced through mutual empowerment of social forces and int'l support
SBY	Battle fatigue and moral running low amongst GAM due to losses during martial law.	MoU which includes the offer of self-government. Change of state policies are due to the strengthening of forces that favour talks.	Renewed international interest in Aceh due to tsunami.	State effectiveness enhanced through mutual empowerment of social forces and int'l support

## **Theoretical Considerations**

The case of Aceh shows that social control has fluctuated throughout time. In this respect, the case of Aceh differs from the case of East Timor. The annexation of East Timor which was perceived by the Timorese as an act of colonialism which meant the people never accepted the legitimacy of the state. There was no strong indication that there was any participation from the population. Compliance was predominately achieved through coercive means. In comparison to the case of Aceh, the Indonesian state enjoyed high levels of social control from the revolution against the Dutch until the formation of GAM. The Acehnese nationalist elite wholeheartedly joined the Indonesian nationalist movement against the Dutch which indicated participation. After the Dutch departed the region, the Acehnese accepted Indonesian territorial boundaries as legitimate and complied with Indonesian rule. However, the perceived grievances of economic exploitation and the lack of political decentralisation ignited a sense of discontent amongst a group of local businessmen who later formed GAM. The demands for sovereignty indicated that social control over social forces in Aceh began to falter. This chapter focused on the period where there was a lack of social control until the peace deal post-tsunami when demands for independence were dropped.

As noted in the case of East Timor, through mutual empowerment the state is most likely to gain control over social forces even in areas where a secessionist movement has been longstanding and commands support from the population it seeks to represent. The case of Aceh provides additional instances to reinforce this. Reasons for this are similar to the case of East Timor. Firstly, the approach works well with

secessionism because sub-nationalism is a feeling specific to a group of people discontented with the state. Because of the feeling that is motivated by that particular group of people, other social groups are unlikely to share any common interests with secessionist groups. Therefore, other social forces are likely to support the state's policies that aim to maintain state security, thus, preventing a secessionist movement from coalescing with other social forces opposing the state. Secondly, secessionist movements are very unlikely to gain international support at the present time. While some states are involved in supporting secessionist movements, such involvement is insufficient for the secessionist movement to achieve independence. For this reason, the state-in-society approach can offer some useful implications for the case of Aceh. However the case of East Timor is a different matter. East Timor was left out from the decolonization process because of the Cold War context and only received its independence later. Consequently, international politics played a bigger part role than historical factors in determining East Timor's political future.

The theory's strong point was its fluidness. First of all, because the theory assumed that the Indonesian state was not a cohesive unit, it captured the politics of policy making within the state. Most importantly, it showed how one state segment can disrupt the official state policy. There were two main sources of opposition within the state that opposed peace talks. The first group would be the military that have been the main actors in spoiling previous agreements and making negative statements, though some have been careful about making comments. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the military is not a unified actor. However, it is safe to say that all support a hard line view on how to deal with the conflict in Aceh. Partially this is due to the military's economic interests within the region. TNI only receives a small amount

from budgetary sources but has to raise the rest from its business activities, some even illegal. Another important factor would be the military's ideological opposition to separatism.

The second source of opposition is the political elite especially from parties. A nationalistic sentiment reined the DPR since the loss of East Timor; consequently, many have advocated tough measures. Because of the experience of East Timor, many disapprove of mediators for fear of 'internationalising' the conflict and enhancing the status of GAM to that of an international actor and as an equal to the Indonesian state. Those opposing talks include representatives from the PDI-P, Golkar, and major Islamic parties. Many have expressed their opposition to the formation of political parties in Aceh.

Elected governments with little commitment to developing democracy may also choose to co-opt the armed forces while having very little interest in democratising the armed forces.<sup>117</sup> For the case of Indonesia under the Megawati administration, Megawati herself had more of an interest in retaining her position of power than reforming the military, though it must be noted that the military no longer enjoys the position and power it once did during the Soeharto era. Inter-ethnic unrest, secessionism and political instability have provided the military with the perfect circumstances to assert its role as the protector of the state against any disintegrative forces which in turn allowed the military to reclaim its primacy over decision-making in the area of security.<sup>118</sup> And as argued in Chapter Three, the military also has its way of asserting its influence through parliament though it no longer has its reserved seats.

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<sup>117</sup> Cawthra and Luckham (eds.), *Governing insecurity: democratic control of military and security establishments in transitional democracies*, p. 10

<sup>118</sup> Aspinall, *The Helsinki Agreement: A More Promising Basis for Peace in Aceh?* p. 55

However, while it is still a powerful political force in post-Soeharto Indonesia, the stabilisation of the political scene and the more authoritative administration under Susilo has reduced its influence. Though its influence has been reduced and it has not made any significant disruptions to the present peace deal with GAM post-tsunami, the ability of the military to disrupt the state's official action cannot be underestimated or overlooked.

Wahid's presidency provides a clear example of this. While Wahid favoured peace talks, the military wanted to conduct a military offensive. However at the time the military was in no position to take an assertive role. This soon changed when the peace process was overshadowed by the impeachment that eventually led to Wahid's removal from office. The military and the parliamentarians who favoured a tougher approach could then play a more assertive role in resolving the conflict in Aceh. Like East Timor, there was an established network of militias in Aceh each with links to the local district command. Such groups were used to attack international monitors during COHA. Their leaders often have grievances against GAM, such as having a family member abducted or killed by the movement. Some were even targets themselves.<sup>119</sup> The case of East Timor also confirms this. The military-backed militias, which disrupted the referendum, also show the military possess the resources to disrupt the state action.

Secondly, because the state-in-society approach does not make any assumptions or generalisations about human behaviour, it captures the fluidity of the decision-making that was brought about by the change of government. Policies under the

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<sup>119</sup> Aspinall and Crouch, *Why the peace process failed?* p. 40-41

implementation of Megawati's nationalistic views had dramatically changed by the time SBY and Kalla came to power.

State-in-society theorists assert that states and societies are in constant flux with one another and have the ability to change one another's actions. The approach does not account for the increase in resources which in turn can increase the effectiveness of the state to carry out its actions, rules and norms. However, it does note that the state's strength to manage social forces is dependent on other factors such as its ability to manage its own resources. The transition from the Wahid to the Megawati administration provides an example of this. While social momentum in Aceh was waning, state effectiveness had much to do with the receding problems that the Habibie and Wahid administrations had to grapple with. It was during the Megawati administration that the inter-ethnic violence was diminishing, secessionist movements such as the one in Riau had disappeared, the economy was picking up and inflation and employment rates were improving. However, a state-in-society theorist could argue that the increased state effectiveness during the Megawati administration can be attributed to the government's ability to tackle the state's pending crises.

The findings from the case of East Timor show that external pressure on the Indonesian state to take a course of action that the state would not have otherwise done; consequently, limiting the state's options. An example of this was the pressure from other states on Indonesia to accept an international peacekeeping force and for the military to halt all of its operation to sabotage the referendum in East Timor. Furthermore, it was during the explosive period of reformasi where secessionist movements saw an opportune moment to make its case for independence while the



state was preoccupied with the pending crisis. Though operating within the same environment, only East Timor gained support from other states for independence. The case of Aceh provides the counterfactual of this. The Acehnese case show that regardless of whether there was an upsurge in social opposition in Aceh, with the absence of international support, the state still had the manoeuvrability to carry out its actions in Aceh.

International involvement is crucial to both sides. International pressure would weaken the government's position resulting in concessions to secessionist demands such as bringing those suspected of human rights abuses to justice or devolving more power to the region. International pressure could go as far as altering the boundaries of the state as has been done in the East Timor case. On the other hand, the international community could turn a blind eye or exert nominal pressure on Jakarta's policies in handling secessionism, consequently, posing fewer limitations to decision-making in Aceh.

The case of Aceh still lacked the support of the international community. Firstly, the tightly controlled media under Soeharto meant little was heard of the Acehnese movement. As Barber notes the relatively unknown Aceh at the international level also created a perception of weakness and illegitimacy in comparison to East Timor.<sup>120</sup> Secondly, unlike East Timor Aceh was a part of the Dutch East Indies; therefore, it lacked a patron to bring its case to the attention of the international community. For East Timor, there has always been international involvement whether it be positive or negative support for the territory. From the 1975 annexation, the Dili incident to East

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<sup>120</sup> Barber (ed.), *Aceh: the untold story*, p. 63

Timor's successful secession was due to its former colonial ruler and its southern neighbour which played a role in bringing East Timor's case into the limelight. To a large degree, the timing of the re-emergence of GAM was unfortunate for their cause for independence. Though domestic and foreign media and NGOs began publicising the Aceh tragedy, much attention was diverted to East Timor. Indonesian's Southeast Asian neighbours are unlikely to interfere with Indonesia's internal affairs considering ASEAN's long tradition of non-intervention. Recent developments have reconfirmed ASEAN member's apathetic stance. Aceh's nearest foreign neighbour Malaysia is unlikely to get involved in the conflict. Member states of ASEAN have a tradition of non-intervention in one another's internal affairs. Even closer to the Malays in terms of geography and ethnicity are the Malay-Muslims in Thailand's most southern provinces. Malaysia has only offered to chair talks between the leaders of Bersatu, an umbrella organisation of the five southern movements, and has clearly stated that it will support Thailand's borders.<sup>121</sup>

The case of Aceh confirms that the context of international politics has much to do with other states as well as the Indonesian state's policies towards managing secessionism. In the case of East Timor, the international context had more to do with achieving independence than its colonial past. The point where East Timor only gained independence more than two decades after Portugal had departed the region reinforces the point. Furthermore, the reason why other governments did not oppose the annexation had much to do with the cold war. Likewise, the war on terror has enabled the Indonesian state to capitalise on the situation and for other governments to place a priority on state security.

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<sup>121</sup> Michel Gilquin (trans by Michael Smithies), *The Muslims of Thailand*, (Bangkok, IRASEC and Silkworm Books, 2002), p. 86-7

## **Chapter 6**

### **Evaluating the state-in-society approach**

At the beginning of this thesis, I set out to do the following:

- 1) To theoretically explain why the two secessionist movements within the same political context have resulted in different outcomes.
- 2) To contribute to the empirical study of the respective secessionist movements.
- 3) To address the lack of comparative analysis in the field of ethnic conflict specifically in Indonesia.

My second aim has been addressed in Chapters Four and Five. By conducting research and presenting my findings through a comparative study, I have addressed my third aim. In the following sections, I will present my findings from the cases of Aceh and East Timor. These findings will shed light on why the two secessionist movements have resulted in two different outcomes. Based on my own findings, I will also present some suggestions to enhance explanatory power of the state-in-society approach.

### **Summary of Findings**

This thesis aimed to explain why the East Timor and Aceh have resulted in two different outcomes. Based on my findings, the cases differed because East Timor gained support from other states for independence while Aceh lacked such support.

Some suggest that external support for East Timor was due to its colonial past.<sup>1</sup> However though this provided a strong argument for East Timorese independence post-Soeharto, this does not explain why the timing of independence had not come any sooner after the Portuguese departed the region in 1975. In this study, international involvement includes external state involvement within the conflict between the secessionist movement and the state it seeks to secede from. External involvement may support the state or the secessionist movement which in turn will enhance the capacity of either side to act.

However, I am reluctant to make far-reaching generalisations. Though I had seven instances to test the validity of the state-in-society approach, I had only two case studies. Such deductions rarely claim success in exporting generalisations to other cases. Furthermore, the literature surrounding and the debates of globalisation and its effects on the state also reinforce this. What I have presented are two factors- the international context and interests- that influenced the dynamics in the cases of East Timor and Aceh. One or more may have influenced the cases at various junctures. These observations may have useful implications for secessionism in process or may present useful explanations for any successful cases. What is certain in these two cases is that international involvement is crucial in the dynamics between a secessionist movement and the state. It is crucial because it can enhance the capability of either side that states, NGOs or international organisations may choose to lend their support.

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<sup>1</sup> Aspinall and Berger, 'The break-up of Indonesia? Nationalisms after Decolonization and the limits of the nation-state in post-cold war Southeast Asia'

This begs the question under what circumstances do other states influence Indonesia's policies on managing secessionism? I am reluctant to make any firm generalisations due to limited numbers of cases in my thesis. Furthermore, it has also been noted that internal intervention is selective where intervention might occur in some states such as Afghanistan but may not occur in others.<sup>2</sup> The birth of Bangladesh presents an anomaly as do the five 'stans' of Central Asia. It is these cases where the outcomes are path-dependent and more contextual details need to be taken into account. However, the patterns and findings based on the cases of East Timor and Aceh may have useful implications for other cases or may be used to stimulate further research or generate hypotheses. The two cases show that two factors have influenced the path of the two secessionist movements which include the politics of the international context, interests and state relations. One factor may not be exclusively responsible for the outcome of each instance but one or more may be combined together to influence the happenings of each case. These factors in turn provide opportunities for or constraints to other states to act in the concern of secessionism.

The findings in the two cases show that the context of international politics can influence other states to take a stance on secessionism which can enhance the state capacity in managing secessionism. The ideological conflict during the Cold War in turn supported Indonesia's annexation of East Timor. This support enabled Indonesia to carry out its actions which it would not have otherwise done. Other instances such as when other states such as Australia began exerting pressure on the Indonesian military to stop its operations to sabotage the referendum and accept a peacekeeping force reinforces this. Increasingly, international intervention has been conducted on

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<sup>2</sup> Chandler, 'Rhetoric without responsibility: the attraction of 'ethical' foreign policy', p. 307-308

the basis of 'the right thing to do' or otherwise labelled as ethical foreign policy.<sup>3</sup> This involves taking action for the good or interests of others as opposed to national interests. Examples are illustrated in the cases of international intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, former Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone as well as the case of East Timor.

From the findings of the two cases, I am reluctant to say that support from other states is the determinant factor as to whether secessionism remains in process or is successfully granted independence. The 1991 Dili incident shows that the Indonesian state had the ability to defy international criticisms and continue its reign over East Timor for an additional eight years. Also with the case of East Timor, an international peacekeeping force could only move in when Habibie gave his consent. Furthermore, in a last attempt to save the faltering COHA peace talks, the HDC was backed by the US, EU, Japan and the World Bank in an attempt to bring the Indonesian government and GAM together for talks in Tokyo to be held on 17 May 2003.<sup>4</sup> Again, this example shows that international backed initiatives do not necessarily achieve its goals and objectives.

The two cases show that the international context in which states operate in influence how they would act. The Cold War influenced many western states such as the US and Australia to support Indonesia's annexation of East Timor. In the 1990s, ethical foreign policy began to take hold as international intervention in Somalia, Yugoslavia and Sierra Leone as well as East Timor was conducted on the basis of the right thing to do. With the case of Aceh, the concern on state security in the light of the 9/11

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 296

<sup>4</sup> Unlike the peace talks facilitated by the HDC in December 2002, the Japanese government hosted the talks held in Tokyo.

attacks provided the Indonesian state more manoeuvre to take military action and implement martial law in the territory.

It is not only in the area of secessionism where it is hard to theorise under what conditions external forces will effect state capacity whether it is to enhance state capacity or undermine it. Linda Weiss suggests that state capacity is not uniform in all policy areas. Consequently, an idea of generalised state capacity is meaningless, thus, it becomes more useful to examine specific policy arenas.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, Michael Mann examines four potential threats to nation-states including global capitalism, environmental danger, identity politics and post-nuclear geo-politics.<sup>6</sup> He concludes that impacts on the nation-state in these four areas are varied. How globalisation may strengthen or weaken the nation-state or the nation-state system differs according to the area.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, the influence of external involvement, whether to enhance the capacity of the secessionist movement or the state, may vary according to time and space. In many cases, international involvement is a case of selectiveness as noted earlier. For the case of secessionism, it is unlikely that nations seeking independence will gain any formal support from other states at present, though secret support is a different matter. However, it is sufficient to say that other states and international bodies can play a role in limiting and enhancing the state's capacity to manage secessionism, though cannot be overly emphasised as a determining factor to produce a certain outcome.

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<sup>5</sup> Linda Weiss, *The Myth of the Powerless State governing the economy in a global era*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p. 4

<sup>6</sup> Michael Mann, 'Has globalization ended the rise and rise if the nation-state?', *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 4, No. 3

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 494-495

In some instances, Jakarta has demonstrated the ability to defy international criticisms as it did after 1991 Dili incident. Though it can be argued that international criticisms were not forceful and Jakarta was still an important trading partner to some states including Australia, this instance shows the relationship between developing states and the external pressure is not as straightforward as illustrated in the weak state literature. This has implications for Buzan's weak state's analysis. This also parallels Robert H. Jackson's analysis of the international normative framework that supports 'third world' state jurisdiction which have experienced decolonisation often as a 'formal-legal condition' or what he terms as 'negative sovereignty'.<sup>8</sup> Here, the international arena should be viewed as a normative framework for keeping the territorial bounds of these 'quasi-states' intact. On the other hand, governments that possess positive sovereignty have the capabilities that enable them to carry out their own actions both domestically and internationally. Also reiterated by Christopher Clapham in his book, *'Africa and the International System'*, the inter-state system, international institutions and regulations are likely to deter such a drastic prospect from occurring.<sup>9</sup>

Though Clapham addresses this dichotomy by acknowledging the danger of dividing states in a simple weak and strong state binary and argues instead for a long continuum of fragile states<sup>10</sup>, there is a danger of portraying a picture of these states of incapable of carrying out actions with other states in the international system.

The state-in-society approach, without my added assumptions, is likely to have more explanatory power in cases of secessionism where there is no link with any other

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<sup>8</sup> Jackson, *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*, p. 26-28

<sup>9</sup> Clapham, *Africa and the International System*, p. 22

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 15



state; thus, resulting in no international involvement. The approach is most likely to work well with secessionism because of the approach's element of mutual empowerment. Because nationalism is specific to a particular group, other groups are unlikely to endorse the goals of a secessionist group. As such, the state is supported in its goals of maintaining state security. Based on the assumptions put forward by the state-in-society theorists, the more social control, the more manoeuvrability the state has in managing secessionism. The seven instances of this study reinforce that state capability to act is dependent on social control. The instances under the New Order in the cases of East Timor and Aceh show that the state had high levels of social control or achieved integrated domination. The outcome of both cases show that the state had very little limitations to its policies in managing East Timor and Aceh.

With the instances under Habibie and Wahid where social control was low, the state has many limitations to what it could carry out. The outcome in both cases show that the state had conceded to social demands which was a significant departure from period under the New Order. The instances that followed including Megawati and SBY show that state-society relations resulted in dispersed domination where neither the state nor society had achieved domination over the other. The instances under the two presidencies show that increased social control from Habibie and Wahid granted the state more manoeuvrability to carry out its actions.

However, support from other social forces in supporting the state in achieving its goals towards managing the movements in East Timor and Aceh was coupled with the fact that the Indonesian state was managing two relatively weak movements. Though both Fretilin and GAM had enjoyed support from the population it aimed to represent,

its capability to disrupt the state was limited to its territory. As such, the two movements' capability alone did not pose a significant challenge to the state. The challenge from secessionism only became apparent in the context of regime change in 1998. The state was operating in an environment of conflict with a multiplicity of demands from social forces. Because both lacked support from other social forces in Indonesia, the determining factor that differentiated the cases of East Timor and Aceh was support from other states or international organisations. Consequently, the seven instances confirm the central hypothesis.

### **The Strength of the State-in-Society Approach**

As this thesis is about centre-regional relations, I needed a theory that not only captured the on-going dynamics between the state and groups seeking independence but that also accounted for the ability of both actors to carry out their actions in order to fulfil their goals. I also deemed it important to acknowledge the ability of external forces to limit or enhance the capability of both the state and independence movements in East Timor and Aceh to act. Many, but not all, theories of ethnicity and nationalism aim to explain causality. While root causes of ethnic conflict had to be explored, the main purpose of the thesis was to explore the interactions between the state and the secessionist movement since the emergence of the secessionist movement to the present. Theories of ethnicity and nationalism could not fully explain what I had set out to do in the thesis often because they were too static.

Because I posed the question: what determines state effectiveness in managing secessionism, I also explored the main schools of state theory. Though corporatism or

other strands of elitism did claim some usefulness, such explanations were unhelpful to the purpose of explaining centre-regional relations because they did not acknowledge the ability of the secessionist movements to carry out their actions. Rather, the emphasis was on the autonomy of the state. On the other hand, Marxism which acknowledges social agency reduces the state to a mere instrument. Elements of pluralism were useful because it recognises the fragmentation of state and society. However, pluralism views the state as an arena for competing interest groups. As such, the theory fails to account for state agency which I deem crucial as the state, at various junctures, can exemplify degrees of autonomy or relative autonomy. I found weak state theories unhelpful as they portrayed a picture of the state incapable of self-rule; hence, failing to acknowledge the autonomy or relative autonomy of the state to carry out its actions. The focus of these theories was to explain causality. As such, weak state theories not only failed to acknowledge state capacity to carry out its actions but also the agency of secessionist movements.

I found that the assumptions put forward by the state-in-society approach addressed these issues. The state-in-society approach assumes that the interactions between state segments and social forces will affect the final outcome of the state action, policy, or norm. As such, it assumes that social forces are actors in their own right. Because secessionist movements possess the ability to put forward their demands, which at times the state has to take into account and may eventually lead to a change in how the state deals with the secessionist movement in question, I found this element of the state-in-society approach suitable for the type of study I set out to conduct for my thesis: the dynamics of centre-regional relations. This addressed my concern about weak state analysis which produces a distorted and static picture of a state, some

incapable of self-rule. Because the state-in-society approach accounts for fluctuating state effectiveness, this made the theory more attractive to the project. Furthermore, the fluidness of the approach also acknowledged that states in the 'developing world' could also vary in capacity.

However, I also added a third dimension to the analytical framework because the claim to statehood can also potentially attract external involvement. Third state involvement can also enhance or limit that capability of to carry out actions. It is the interactions between the three clusters of power which formed the basis of this study.

There were many advantages and useful elements of the state-in-society approach which explained the dynamics between the Indonesian state and social forces in East Timor and Aceh. Firstly, I found that the approach captured the differences in policy-making within the Indonesian state. Migdal intended to create an approach that moves away from groups and their static goals to focus on the process of the continuing interactions between groups.<sup>11</sup> He does not conceal his distaste for rigorous approaches where 'action is frozen'<sup>12</sup>. Complexity has been significant obstacles to general theories that attempt to accurately explain and predict human behaviour in politics. Having operationalised the state-in-society approach, in both the cases of Aceh and East Timor, I found that the approach captured the interactions between the state segments and social forces: GAM and Fretilin in the cases of Aceh and East Timor, exceptionally well. Because the state-in-society approach does not assume any regularity in behaviour as in many other theories or approaches such as rational choice, the approach captures the fluidity of decision-making under each president.

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<sup>11</sup> Migdal, *State in society: studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*, p. 23

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 24

The case of Aceh provides a good example of this observation. As seen from the Wahid administration, the president favoured a democratic resolution to the conflict which resulted in the 2000 Humanitarian Pause. When Megawati came to power, military operations were combined with peace talks but because some state segments (military and a number of political parties such as the PDI-P) grew increasingly impatient with the lack of progress, martial law was imposed. After the 2004 elections, vice president Kalla re-introduced peace talks again. The state-in-society approach has captured the transformation of goals and behaviour from the three consecutive administrations well.

Another element of the state-in-society approach that I found had useful implications was its assumptions about the state. The state-in-society approach assumes that the image of the state contradicts its actual practices.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the state-in-society approach acknowledges that the state is not a cohesive unit. The main schools of state theory fail to acknowledge the potential disunity of the state. Marxists portray the state as a captive of the dominant classes or the regulator of class conflict. The state, thus, acts in a unified manner. The majority of pluralists, with the exception of group theorists, view the state as an arena for interests groups. Elitism views the state as a coherent instrument of state action.

The case of East Timor provides a clear example of the incohesiveness of the state. In the period prior to the referendum up to the period where an international peacekeeping force was employed in the territory, the military showed considerable capacity via militias to disrupt the state's official action or in this instance the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 49

referendum. This also occurred in Aceh under Megawati's administration. There was an established network of militias in Aceh each with links to the local district command. Such groups were used to attack international monitors during COHA in order to disrupt the peace talks. Under Wahid's administration, the military also criticised the peace talks. At that juncture, the military was in no position to carry out its goals to oppose the state's official action. It is not only the military that opposed peace deals with secessionist movements; parliamentarians have also endorsed tougher approaches in dealing with secessionism. The way these two state segments have opposed the state's official action illustrates the lack of cohesiveness within the state.

However, the military has shown that it had the ability to take matters a step further while parliamentarians could at most criticise or utilise the failure of conflict resolution in election campaigns. The military's ability to disrupt the 1999 referendum in East Timor illustrates the point. Though the state-in-society approach has captured the conflict of interests amongst state segments well, the military as a dominant institution in many states, especially in Indonesia deserve more recognition as a leading actor as opposed to be treated as 'an equal' among other state segments. Where the military's role has been dominant, there still remains a legacy of its involvement in politics. Indonesia is not a unique case where the military still plays a role in policy making though not as influential as before. States such as Pakistan also continue to have a military influence in politics. As a useful theory should possess an element of specificity, it might be worthwhile to make specifications about the

military, considering Migdal's aims to especially explain new states in Asia and Africa.<sup>14</sup> I will return to this concern later in the chapter.

However the assumptions on the state as an incohesive unit, though useful, are not novel according to many, such as the new institutionalists and group theorists. In his 1988 volume, Migdal takes Max Weber's definition of the state: 'it is an organization, composed of numerous agencies led and coordinated by the state's leadership (executive authority) that has the ability or the authority to make and implement the binding rules for all that people as well as the parameters of rule making for other social organizations in a given territory, using the use of force if necessary to have its way'.<sup>15</sup>

However in his 1996 volume, Migdal distances himself from the Weberian definition of the state considering it unhelpful in capturing the realities of the state. It becomes an aim of his work to 'present a new definition of the state in place of Max Weber's widely used one', which according to Migdal has 'led scholars down sterile paths'.<sup>16</sup> For Migdal, Weber's definition poses a few problems.<sup>17</sup> Firstly, the focus on monopoly does not capture situations 'where authority is fragmented and contentious'. Secondly, the words used in Weber's definition of the state such as "legitimate" 'diverts attention from contending forms of authority or disgruntlement with dominant forms of authority'. Thirdly, using Weber's definition of the state as an ideal type does not capture the realities of state; therefore, the variation of states can only be measured as distant or some cases will be posed as a deviation of the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 5

<sup>15</sup> Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, p. 19

<sup>16</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*, p. 3

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 14-15

standard.<sup>18</sup> Based on these criticisms of the Weberian model, Migdal suggests a new definition of the state: ‘The state is a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by 1) *the image of a coherent, controlling organization, which is a representation of its people bounded by that territory, and 2) the actual practices of its multiple parts*’<sup>19</sup>.

This begs the question how the new definition has transformed the state-in-society approach. It does not. Though Migdal accepts Weber’s definition of the state in his 1988 book, he still argues that there are internal divisions and tensions within the state.<sup>20</sup> This is also reiterated in his 2001 book. Though Migdal’s new definition does not transform his theory it does make it more consistent with his state-in-society approach.

Although the assumptions of the fragmented state are not innovative, there are differences between the state-in-society and other approaches. As mentioned in Chapter One, Migdal’s state-in-society approach shares many similarities with group theory. Both would agree that the policy is a result of interactions between social segments, or pressure groups according to group theorists, and the state apparatus. As such, both would agree that the state is fragmented.

However, this is where the similarities end. There are two major differences between group theorists and the state-in-society approach concerning the state. Firstly, the state-in-society approach would agree that state segments are self-interested and may have their own agenda which in turn may play against the state’s official action. On

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 15

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 16

<sup>20</sup> Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, chapter six



the other hand, group theorists would view the state as neutral which would not necessarily have its own agenda. Secondly, views diverge concerning the state's capacity to act. Both would agree that policies are a result of the interactions between the state and social forces indicating the state's limitations to act according to will. The state-in-society approach would acknowledge the state's relative autonomy. This occurs when social control is high; thus, the higher the levels of social control, the more capacity the state possesses to carry out its own actions. On the other hand, group theorists do not acknowledge state autonomy. Rather, the state is perceived as an arena for pressure group activity and interaction.

### **Weaknesses of the State-in-Society Approach**

One of the problems I ran into when applying the state-in-society approach was its lack of determinacy and measurability. The state-in-society approach aims to identify and analyse patterns of domination and change. Domination is 'the recurring ways in which some use violence, threats, and other means to make others behave in ways they would not have otherwise chosen' and when and why this position of dominance changes.<sup>21</sup>

Social control is key to domination. As Migdal argues: 'With high levels of social control, states can mobilize their populations effectively, gaining tremendous strength in facing external foes. Internally, state personnel can gain autonomy from social

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 1

groups in determining their own preferred rules for society...' <sup>22</sup> The measures that reflect the strength of social control are reflected in the following three:

- 1) Compliance. The strength of the state is dependent on the extent the population will comply with the state's demands.
- 2) Participation. The strength of the state is also enhanced by the ability to organise the population into specialised tasks.
- 3) Legitimacy. According to the state-in-society approach, legitimacy involves the acceptance of the state's rules and its social control as 'true and right' <sup>23</sup>.

Based on the above, the greater the social control, the more the state can achieve in terms of their goals and how the rules of the game should be. <sup>24</sup> Social forces also use the same currency as do states to gain social control. When a state possesses high levels of social control, the state has more manoeuvrability to respond to secessionism and vice versa. Furthermore, parts of state can coalesce with social forces to strengthen their position in order to carry out their actions which may contradict the state's official action. Migdal predicts that struggles between the state and social forces will produce two outcomes. Integrated domination occurs when the state or society can establish nationwide domination. On the other hand, when neither the state nor society can establish nationwide domination, dispersed domination occurs.

When operationalising the approach, I ran into problems of identifying the levels of social control especially in the instances of dispersed domination. As indeterminacy is problematic, the state-in-society approach lacks the power to predict outcomes.

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<sup>22</sup> Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, p. 52

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 52

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 52

Though still highly contested and diverse<sup>25</sup>, a theory within the social sciences become useful when it can 1) simplify the complexities of the real world in order to increase our control or enhance our adaptability and 2) provide us with a basis in order to make predictions or expectations about the world.<sup>26</sup> While predictability within a theory of political science is still one of those elements that remain contentious, the aims of the state-in-society approach were not only to explain but also to predict. Based on the approach, Migdal has suggested a few issues including: ‘When social organisations besides the state exercise significant social control, how has the state’s ability in different issue areas been affected?’<sup>27</sup> As such, the ‘when’ clearly indicates that Migdal has meant for the state-in-society approach to possess a certain degree of predictability. But because I did not know at what levels social control had to be in the cases of dispersed domination in combination with the vagueness and immeasurability of indicators of social control (compliance and legitimacy; and participation) I could not categorise and figure out the constellations in order to make predictions.

To illustrate my point, my own project did not run into problems of indeterminacy during the Soeharto period where social control is widely accepted to be high. I found it easy to identify the extent of social control under the New Order because it was absolute. Corporatist institutions ensured participation. Participation in elections was an indicator that the population complied with state demands. High economic growth rates legitimised the New Order and its rules and norms as ‘true and right’. Various structures were in place to guarantee compliance from the population such as the

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<sup>25</sup> Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 7

<sup>26</sup> Jarol B. Manheim et al., *Empirical Political Analysis Research Methods in Political Science*, (New York and London: Longman, 2005), p. 15

<sup>27</sup> Migdal, *State in society: studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*, p. 57

military. Corporatism where social forces were linked to a state institution illustrated the ability of the Indonesian state to command participation over the population. Soeharto's New Order was highly centralised and power was concentrated at the apex of the New Order elites. Popular support was either firmly behind the regime or social opposition was carefully managed as mentioned in Chapter Three. In all, the key strength of the New Order was the amount of autonomy it possessed to carry out its actions. There were also low levels of social opposition and incidents of opposition that did occur were dealt with swiftly and effectively.

On the other extreme under the Habibie administration, there were low levels of social control as social forces possessed the ability to topple the state. Under both these governments, integrated domination had been achieved though by different actors. With the instance of the Soeharto government, the state achieved integrated domination over social forces. While during the Habibie administration, social forces achieved integrated domination. Because the degree of social control during these two periods was absolute and clear, regardless of whether social forces or the state were dominant, predictions could be made.

I had anticipated a problem with indeterminacy with state society relations under post-Soeharto governments. Under these circumstances, the lack of clear indicators to show how much social control post-Soeharto governments possessed were difficult to identify. Overall, social control was lower in comparison to the New Order. Power was more dispersed and the state often had to take social demands into account.

The lack of clarity in applying the state-in-society approach to reality is illustrated in Dauvergne's edited volume 'Weak and Strong States in Asia-Pacific Societies'. In this study, the authors of each individual case study have agreed to a general definition of the state.<sup>28</sup> However, other concepts such as capability, legitimacy, weak and strong are up to the discretion of each individual author. Though each of the authors are examining different political contexts but because they are dealing with different visions of weak and strong, the results showing whether the theory has any explanatory power according to each case study is questionable. If some results conclude that the theory lacks any useful implications, this will beg the question whether the theory failed to capture the realities of the political world because the results were skewed by the individual definitions set by the authors or whether the fault was in the theory itself. This may pose greater problems when applying the state-in-society approach to a cross-national comparative study especially when Migdal has made it one of his aims to 'provide new and exciting answers to well-studied issues in comparative studies...'<sup>29</sup> Not only because the concept of weak and strong are vague but also because the approach is a process-oriented approach; consequently, the concepts of weak and strong are situational and contextual. Because the concepts of weak and strong are fluid in relation to the context, the concepts cannot be standardised to make a cross-national comparison.

Rather, I found that the state-in-society approach is more suited for capturing and simplifying the complexities of the world as opposed to making predictions. Though I ran into problems of indeterminacy concerning social control, the state-in-society approach assumes that the state and society are mutually empowering.

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<sup>28</sup> Dauvergne, (ed.), *Weak and Strong States in Asia-Pacific Societies*, p. 2

<sup>29</sup> Migdal, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*, p. 3

The concept of mutual empowerment was a reaction to statist claims where the state is viewed as crucial to socio-economic change.<sup>30</sup> The concept of mutual empowerment is also reiterated by Peter Evans in 'Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation' where he criticises the idea of zero-sum power relations between the state and society. Mutual empowerment in the case of managing secessionism was just as institutionalised as instances such as economic development under the New Order where there was strong support from the public and the business sector cooperated with the state under corporatist institutions.

Because subnationalism is a feeling specific to a particular group, other state segments and social forces are unlikely to join forces with secessionist groups to oppose the state. Therefore, it had been clear that various other social groups and state segments would not support an independent state of Aceh or of East Timor while a great deal of others were indifferent to how the state manages secessionism; thus, at the very least these groups did not oppose the state's initiatives in managing secessionism. Whether or not other social forces within the Indonesian supported state's means-peace negotiations or military action- in managing secessionism, there was a widespread interest within Indonesia to maintain security and prevent Balkanisation. Opinion polls have shown increased support for Megawati in her tough measures against the GAM.<sup>31</sup> The approach is most likely to work well with secessionism because nationalism of a particular group is unlikely to gain support from other social forces.

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<sup>30</sup> For example see Evans, Rueschemeyer, Skocpol, *Bringing the state back in*

<sup>31</sup> Anthony L. Smith, 'Indonesia's Aceh Problem: Measuring International and Domestic Costs, *Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 5, July 2003, p. 3

However in other policy areas such as trade agreements which may benefit some and disadvantage others, the outcome of a struggle between the state and society will most likely become less predictable due to problems with measurability and indeterminacy of social control. The concern here would be how many groups of social forces and state segments would have to join forces in order for this coalition to successfully carry out their actions?

With the case of managing secessionism in Aceh and East Timor, I have argued that the majority of social forces would endorse its policies for the sake of security and to maintain the territorial boundaries. However, there are other social forces within the archipelago in distant islands on the eastern side where secessionism in Aceh seems like a distant issue of their concerns. In my final assessment of the situation, I argue that the social forces that do endorse state action in Aceh and other secessionist areas as illustrated in the polls. If we were to accept that certain groups can enhance the state's capacity to carry out its action, this leads to another related question. Are all social forces equal in terms of power or what they have to offer to the state in order to enhance state capacity? Or if we were to assume that different state segments (such as the military in the cases of Aceh and East Timor) and social forces possess different capacities, would it be a matter of which state segments or social forces would have to coalesce to successfully achieve their goals? As such, would the state seek support from certain groups more than others in order to enhance its capacity to carry out its goals?

Based on a collection of essays applying the state-in-society approach, authors of the edited volume, *State Power and Social Forces: domination and transformation in the*

*Third World*, have concluded that power is somewhat similar to wealth which can in turn be divided or accumulated. Some groups may possess more power than others.<sup>32</sup> On this note, neo-pluralists share such concerns which came as a result of criticisms of pluralism which failed to take note of inequality amongst groups. Here, the neo-pluralists developed an argument that business interests are given more importance in comparison to other social interests.<sup>33</sup> For the state-in-society theorists, this resource of power within society varies according to conditions such as the state's capacity to 'penetrate and centrally coordinate the activities' of that society, the organisation and consciousness of these groups, and most to the extent where of the state elites and these social groups can converge.<sup>34</sup> This point has not been developed further and seemed to have lost its importance in Migdal's later 2001 volume, *State in Society Studying How State and Societies Transform and Constitution One Another*.

A useful theory is one that has a certain degree of generality that can be applied to other relevant cases.<sup>35</sup> If generality concerns the different phenomenon that the theory can account for<sup>36</sup>, the state-in-society approach can be classified as general. The state-in-society approach does have room to manoeuvre in a variety of different social contexts. This flexibility according to context has been deemed more suitable than approaches that are more restrictive.<sup>37</sup> Though flexibility and manoeuvrability within the approach can address a variety of contexts and situations; this leads to a concern

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<sup>32</sup> Migdal, Kohli, and Shue (eds.), *State Power and Social Forces: domination and transformation in the Third World*, p. 321

<sup>33</sup> Dunleavy and O'Leary, *Theories of the State the politics of liberal democracy*, p. 293

<sup>34</sup> Migdal, Kohli, and Shue (eds.), *State Power and Social Forces: domination and transformation in the Third World*, p. 321-322

<sup>35</sup> Michael Coppedge, 'Theory Building and Hypothesis Testing: Large- vs. Small- N Research on Democratization', Paper prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, April 2-27, 2002, p. 2

<sup>36</sup> Will H. Moore, 'Evaluating Theory in Political Science', Unpublished paper, 9 August 2001, <http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~whmoore/researchpapers.html>, accessed 6 June 2006

<sup>37</sup> Migdal, Kohli, and Shue (eds.), *State Power and Social Forces: domination and transformation in the Third World*, p. 319



that the approach is too general and lacks specificity. It accounts for the effectiveness of the state, policy outcomes, state disunity and the interactions between state segments and social forces.

I have illustrated that the state-in-society lacked predictability power. However, the approach still captures the mutual empowerment between the state segments within the state and social forces to oppose the secessionist movements. In order to explain these phenomena within different states, with different social forces, interacting in different policy areas, in different times; the state-in-society approach has simplified its explanations to capsule and explain the different situations. As such, with its generality comes simplicity. However, oversimplified assumptions run into the risk of trading off its accuracy for simplicity. As Michael Coppedge argues: 'Only a complex theory can begin to approximate the richness of reality'<sup>38</sup>.

Even though simplifying the world of politics is what most political scientists set out to do, it is generally accepted that universal rules are impossible to form due to the nature and complexity of the world of politics.<sup>39</sup> If we accept that the world of politics is complex, then a theory of political science should then be falsifiable.<sup>40</sup> As such, challenge for a theorist to construct a theory that maintains a balance between a certain degree of generality and also a degree of specificity. It should be 'specific enough so that it is clear what evidence is required to determine whether the evidence is consistent or inconsistent with the implications'<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Coppedge, 'Theory Building and Hypothesis Testing: Large- vs. Small- N Research on Democratization', p. 3

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 2

<sup>40</sup> Moore, 'Evaluating Theory in Political Science', p. 3; Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, p. 20

<sup>41</sup> Moore, 'Evaluating Theory in Political Science', p. 3

Returning to the two cases, though the military has illustrated that it possesses the capacity that exceeds other segments within the state, the state-in-society makes general assumptions on segments within the state opposing the state's official action which does explain the instances within both cases because of its generality. Because the state-in-society approach focussed on the interactions between the state and society, it never specified issues such as resources that might in turn strengthen state effectiveness.

The examples from applying the state-in-society approach indicate that the theory is potentially an all-encompassing theory. Combined with vagueness of terms such as dispersed domination, the theory has more manoeuvrability to capture the realities of the world of politics. If this is the case does this make the state-in-society approach a non-falsifiable theory? Because my comparative study can only be classified as a small-*N* (which consists of two case studies with seven instances between the two), I am not in the position to make any firm conclusions, though the findings of both the cases seem to indicate that the state-in-society approach is non-falsifiable.

### **Suggestions for the State-in-Society Approach**

I have questioned the difference in abilities of various groups to act. In this section, I propose that the military should be given special consideration due to its capacity and relative autonomy to carry out its own initiatives to disrupt the state's official action. The suggestions are aimed to add specificity to the state-in-society approach and enhance its explanatory power. However, due to the limited number of instances in

this comparison, I do not claim to propose law-like regularities. My goal is perhaps less ambitious than Migdal's. While he aims to present an approach suitable for all Asian and African states, I remain fairly reserved in my goal. I aim to propose certain observations and implications that may have further implications for other cases of secessionism.

### *The position of the military within the state*

The first of my concerns is the position of the military within the state-in-society approach. The military as a dominant institution in many states especially in Indonesia deserve more recognition as a leading actor as opposed to being treated as 'an equal' among other state segments. One of the strong points of the state-in-society approach is that it assumes that the practices of the state often times contradict the cohesive image of the state. This suggests that the state's final output might diverge from the state's official action. Migdal argues that social organisations may coalesce with one another or with parts of the state, or parts of the state can join forces with one another to oppose the state's official action.<sup>42</sup> I identified a few state segments, including certain political parties such as the PDI-P and Golkar as well as the military, that often opposed the state's official action when it was perceived to be 'too soft'. However, my findings also show that the military had the capacity to carry out its own initiatives to disrupt the state's official action. A clear example of this would be how the military possessed the capacity to disrupt the internationally backed referendum without having to coalesce with other parts of the state or any other social force. If the military were to be recognised as an actor among state segments which possesses

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<sup>42</sup> Migdal, *State in society: studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*, p. 11-22

greater capacity than others to carry out its actions, this would also in turn enhance the complexity of the theory.

Based on the findings of the two cases, the military has exemplified its ability to oppose the state despite the state's initiatives to limit the military's power. There are numerous accounts where the military defied the state's official action and embarked on its own initiatives in Aceh and East Timor. Furthermore though democratisation has in part curtailed the military's direct influence in politics, in my final assessment I conclude that the military adapted well to the new situation especially when the civilian governments have failed to address the military's territorial structure. This tells us that the military's ability to adapt to situation cannot be underestimated and the military as a relatively independent actor with the capacity to carry out its actions cannot be undermined. The outcomes in democratising the military under the different presidencies in Indonesia also show that success is varied.

The armed forces in all countries exercise a certain degree political influence.<sup>43</sup> If we subscribe to this view, this should not disrupt the aims of the state-in-society approach which is intended to explain the complexities of new Asian and African states. This political influence may vary according to time and place. In the case of Indonesia, the military has long had a dominant role in Indonesia's politics and society. It is not uncommon for many countries, including Indonesia, for their militaries to have a continuous role in politics.<sup>44</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Four, despite attempts to bring

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<sup>43</sup> Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics Military Coups and Governments*, (London: Prentice-Hall, 1977), p.3

<sup>44</sup> S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback the role of the military in politics*, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962), p. 3

the armed forces under democratic control in many states, the military rarely becomes subordinate to the civilian government.

The military perceives itself as the defender of the nation. Unlike parliamentarians that are nationalistic in their outlook such as the majority of members of the Golkar party and PDI-P, the Indonesian armed forces possess the ability to carry out its own initiatives which it sees fit when they perceive official state action in managing secessionism could potentially lead to the destruction of national unity. As S.E. Finer argues, the armed forces have three advantages over other civilian institutions within the state. The armed forces possess 'a marked superiority in organization, a highly emotionalized symbolic status, and a monopoly of arms'<sup>45</sup>.

The case of East Timor illustrates this well. The military had the resources at hand to carry out its operations to disturb any plans which it perceived to be detrimental to national unity. The Indonesian military even had the financial resources to fund militias in East Timor to portray an image of a territory incapable of self-rule. The military's financial autonomy, which contributed to its capacity to carry out its action, has much to do with its relative autonomy from the central government's budget. This is because the military has its own capacity to raise funds. This capacity has been facilitated since the 1950s when the territorial structure was institutionalised which entrenched the military's presence in the regions both politically and economically.<sup>46</sup> While combining Migdal's assumptions about the state and based on my own findings, I propose that the parts of the state may coalesce with social forces to contradict the state's official action but the military is the institution that possesses the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 6

<sup>46</sup> Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism, and Institutional Resistance*, p. 4

resources and the capacity to carry out its own initiatives to contradict the state's official action.

While Finer's proposed three advantages rings true for many militaries as well as Indonesia, I found the Indonesian military on a number of occasions was confined by context. In other words, though the military possesses advantages over other civilian institutions, this does not necessarily mean that the military has the capacity to act according to will or possesses the autonomy independent of other state segments or social forces. After disrupting the referendum, the military was confined by its wounded reputation both domestically and internationally. However this soon changed during Wahid's impeachment and Megawati's subsequent ascendance to power.

In retrospect, the military opposed the state's official action when it perceived governmental initiatives as a threat to the unity of the nation. Incidents where the military have disrupted the state's official action included conducting the referendum in East Timor under Habibie and COHA under Megawati. The military was emboldened towards the end of Wahid's tenancy when the president's position was duly weakened and he was subsequently impeached. Learning from her predecessor's experience, Megawati became dependent on the military for political survival. Consequently, the extent that post-Soeharto governments could fulfil their demands also was highly dependent on the relationship with the military.

The extent to which the military becomes politicised is dependent on the weakness of the civilian political leaders' organisations and their inability to deal with the

country's problems.<sup>47</sup> This in turn makes it difficult for the civilian leadership to control the military if civilians are divided. Once civilian disunity occurs there is a temptation to bring the military to support a particular civilian faction.<sup>48</sup> The SBY-Kalla leadership provides the counterfactual. SBY-Kalla defied any opposition and was more prepared to defend their policies. This is due to less fragmentation and Kalla's relatively strong position within the Indonesian polity including the military.

Indonesia's civil-military relations are characterised by what Samuel Huntington's terms as a lack of 'objective civilian control'<sup>49</sup>. This entails a high level of military professionalism, the subordination of the military under civilian control where the civilian government are the decision-makers on foreign and military policy and the recognition of the military as professional, competent and autonomous. When these three criteria are met, the results are the minimisation of the military in politics and the political intervention of the military. Hence, I propose that the military needs to be regarded as a 'special' institution within the state, which has relative autonomy and the capacity to oppose the state's official action in absence of coalitions among other state segments or social forces. Based on Huntington's assumptions, whether the military will intervene or oppose the state's official is dependent on its professionalism. The more professional the military, the less likely it will intervene in the state's official action.

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<sup>47</sup> Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 221

<sup>48</sup> Michael C. Desch, 'Threat Environments and Military Missions', Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy*, (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 14

<sup>49</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, 'Reforming Civil-Military Relations', Diamond and Plattner (eds.), *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy*, p. 3

## Implications

Though to a certain degree the dynamics between the state and a secessionist movement is path-dependent, it should not prevent or hinder anyone undertaking further research on the issue. If we are to accept that no theory can capture the complexities of the world of politics, there should be no question why we should not generate theories or approaches to capture the complexities of the dynamics of secessionism. Rather, I propose observations or patterns that may have useful implications to other cases in the area of secessionism in process.

Though there are difficulties in theorising the dynamics between the secessionist movement and the state in a three level of analysis due the contextual nature of ethnicity and the unpredictability of external involvement, this does not mean the generalisations and theories are useless and fail to capture the complexities of the realities of the world of politics. Theories in principle are falsifiable.<sup>50</sup> Theories still has its uses in simplifying, explaining and in some cases predicting reality. As such, theories should still be generated to help us make sense of the complexities of the world. There is a lack of comparative studies on ethnic conflicts which help provide useful insights. In turn, these commonalities can help solve or implement certain policy issues concerning managing ethnic conflict management. Comparative studies on ethnic conflicts are lacking within the literature on Indonesia. Bertrand's comparative study on ethnic conflict within Indonesia is the only existing comparative study which offers an explanation to why ethnic conflicts emerge at specific times in specific spaces.

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<sup>50</sup> Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, p. 20



Based on my findings I have made firm statements on the certain issues while I have not on others. Though some have argued that the usefulness of a small-*N* comparative is limited to generated hypothesis,<sup>51</sup> I claim that my findings and conclusions have other helped contribute to the academic literature in various ways. Firstly, though I am reluctant to assert any law-like regularities due to the limited number of case studies, my findings of my case studies have in turn reinforced elements of other general theories within sub-disciplines of politics such as civil-military relations. On the other hand, in other areas such as state theory, my findings have both reinforced some arguments surrounding the debates within state theory while throwing some assumptions into question. Secondly, this study has maintained a balance between making generalisations based on my cases while maintaining contextual details of each case. As such, theories are enhanced and contextual detail is not necessarily compromised. Here, I have contributed to the empirical realities of my two case studies while making generalisations based on my findings. These in turn could also be used to generate hypotheses which may have useful implications for other cases.

Though I aimed to find a theoretical explanation as to why the two secessionist movements resulted in two different outcomes, my thesis also highlighted a few other implications. Firstly, it flagged up the lack of literature or theoretical explanations which incorporates a three level of analysis of centre-regional relations. Or more specifically, exploring what limits or enhances the capacity of the state and a secessionist movement to act and respond to one another. There are an abundance of state theories that offer a theoretical explanation of the capacity of the state. As

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<sup>51</sup> Peters, *Comparative Politics: Theory and Methods*, p. 69

mentioned in the previous chapter, authors such as Mann and Weiss argue that the capacity of the state is dependent on the area in which it seeks to act. On the other hand, there is gap in the literature when it comes to exploring the capacity of a secessionist movement. The findings of my case studies can hopefully offer a starting point or indicators to measure the strength or weakness of a movement. However, my own indicators show that East Timor (minus international involvement) and Aceh are both weak movements in relation to the Indonesian state. Other cases in process could also generate further research and findings.

The gap, or lack, in the literature highlights the need to converge the two into a more dynamic framework which should capture the on-going dynamics between the state and a secessionist movement. The main schools that study nationalism- the primordialists, the ethno-symbolists and the modernists- concentrate predominantly on the causal factors of nationalism. As a result, these theories fail to capture the interactions beyond the emergence of nationalism. Comparative studies of the dynamics between Jakarta and ethnic movements such as my own and Bertrand's book, *Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Indonesia*, have both relied on state theory.

Other movements in process, such as that in Papua, may also pose an interesting comparator with Aceh considering a common political context between the two. The OPM has been considered to be less organised as a secessionist movement than GAM. Though there is support for independence, it has been argued that the overall movement is disunited due to ethnic division and lacks strong leadership. It is a relatively weak movement because it does not have any control of a particular area within Papua. The armed wing of the movement possesses a few modern weapons

between them, but making more use of traditional bows and arrows in attacks. As such, the movement does not really pose a security threat to the military.<sup>52</sup>

Ethnicity is still a fluid concept and unpredictable within itself. The capacity of the state to manage ethnic relations is in flux. The occasional external involvement in secessionist conflict is also unpredictable. The uncertainties of the elements, which are involved in secessionism as well as ethnic conflicts, should not deter scholarship or further research on the matter. The fluid nature of centre-regional relations should continue to be explored to reveal useful implications for the sake of stability and security in many parts of the world.

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<sup>52</sup> *International Crisis Group (ICG)*, 'Papua: Answers to Frequently asked Questions', Asia Briefing No. 53, 5 September 2006, [www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org), accessed 15 October 2006, p. 4

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